

Arab-Americans seek meeting with Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — Arab-American and Muslim leaders called on Monday for a meeting with President Bill Clinton to warn against a proposed counterterrorism bill they fear would trample civil rights, especially those of their communities.

At a news conference after meeting top Justice Department officials, the leaders thanked Mr. Clinton for having urged Americans early on to avoid tarring any ethnic or religious group with the bombing of a federal office building in Oklahoma City that killed at least 81 people last week.

"President Clinton, you ought to meet with Arab-Americans now," James Zogby, president of the Arab-American Institute, a policy research group, said. "We want to tell you we appreciate what you did, but we also want to be a part of helping to shape policy that will affect our lives too."

The White House did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment on the request for a meeting with Mr. Clinton.

Mr. Zogby and his colleagues fear that the Oklahoma bombing may speed passage of Mr. Clinton's omnibus counterterrorism act of 1995, which they regard as targeting Arab and Muslim Americans for political persecution.

The bill, now moving through Congress, would let the government use evidence from secret sources in deportation proceedings for aliens suspected of terrorist involvement.

It would also ban fundraising in the United States for groups the president deems dangerous and grant the FBI broader power to wire-tap suspects.

Mr. Zogby said that the

legislation, which Mr. Clinton urged on Sunday he adopted quickly, would have led to terrible civil rights abuses against Arab-Americans had it been law at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing.

"We would have had mass deportations. We would have had roundups," he said. He said that Arab-Americans constituted "the weak link in the civil liberties chain" because of prejudice and negative stereotypes reinforced by the media.

Abdul Rahman Al Amoudi, executive director of the American Muslim Council, said U.S. Muslims were in effect held "hostage" for 60 hours or so after the bombing, until the arrest of Timothy McVeigh, a 27-year-old Gulf war soldier and rightwing extremist charged in the case.

He cited what he described as the case of an Arab woman he said had had a miscarriage last Thursday in Oklahoma City as an angry mob surrounded her home. Full details of the alleged incident were not immediately available.

Other speakers deplored what they called the taunting of Arab-American school children and "callous and careless media" reports that they said had fanned ethnic hatred.

Khalil Jahshan, chairman of the Council of President of National Arab-American Organizations, hit out at supposed terrorism experts who had been quick to suggest a possible Middle East link to the outrage.

"We have paid a heavy price as a result of this heinous act," he said. "What do we have to do as Arab-Americans to be fully accepted as fellow American citizens in this country?"

Diseases threaten displaced Kurds

ZAKHO (AFP) — Thousands of Kurds who fled their homes when Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq face outbreaks of serious disease because of water shortages, aid workers warned Monday.

Food and blankets are also desperately needed for the 7,000 to 10,000 Kurds registered as displaced by the United Nations and living in tents, a U.N. officer said.

Jamal Nakshbandi, a Kurd working for the Swedish aid agency Qandil, drove an ambulance Monday to the remote mountainous Berwari Bala region east of the border town of Zakho for the first time since more than 30,000 Turkish troops poured into Kurdish-held northern Iraq on March 20.

He found infections such as scabies on a large scale among the displaced families.

And he warned: "The people have no water facilities. If they don't or can't return to their villages before summer, more severe disease such as malaria and typhoid will occur."

Women and children living in a cluster of tents near Batufa, 30 kilometres east of Zakho, clustered round Mr. Nakshbandi's ambulance when he arrived.

The 198 people living there are from a nearby village called Shanke. "We fled more than two weeks ago because of the Turkish shelling," said Gulam Mohammad as he waited for Nakshbandi to care for her crying baby.

Ankara has pledged not to harm civilians during its offensive against Turkish Kurd separatists from the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK). But Iraqi Kurd villagers have repeatedly reported air raids, shelling and looting of their homes.

Samad Khan, head of the U.N. Iraq relief coordination unit, said in Dohuk earlier this week that the agency had 1,301 families or up to 10,000 people registered for aid.

Five hundred blankets are in store in Dohuk "but the organisations don't dare to start with few blankets because they fear turmoil if they don't have enough when going out to distribute them," Mr. Khan said.

Another problem is food, he said. "Even if we get the necessary funding we won't be able to distribute food before the middle of June because there isn't any in our store and it takes some time before we can organise it from Turkey."

Some villagers have started to go back to their homes after Turkish troops left the Berwari Bala region.

"But those thousands of troops remaining between Zakho and Batufa do still frighten the people and prevent them from feeling safe enough to return," said a senior aid worker in Zakho.

Ankara says 490 PKK rebels have been killed so far in its military operation and 13 have been captured. Fifty-eight Turkish soldiers have died.



PAKISTANI DELEGATION: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday receives a delegation representing the Pakistani War College headed by Brigadier Zulfikar Shah. Prince Hassan reviewed at the meeting the situation in the region and Jordanian-Pakistani ties and means of boosting them. The meeting was attended by acting Chair-

man of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lieutenant-General Mohammad Al Huwayyan, the King's military advisor Major-General Hameed Al Fayed, the commander of the Royal War College, Pakistani Ambassador to Jordan Ali Naqvi and the Pakistani military attaché in Amman (Armed Forces Photo)

Iraq approves visit by wives of 2 Americans

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iraq has approved visits by the wives of two imprisoned Americans, but U.S. efforts to have a Polish diplomat see them remain stymied, the U.S. State Department said Monday.

Iraq has notified Poland, intermediary for the United States in dealing with Baghdad, that visas will be issued as soon as the wives arrive in Amman, department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"This obviously is a hopeful sign," he said. But he criticized Iraq's refusal to permit Ryszard Krystosik, a Polish diplomat, to visit the two jailed Americans.

He said that one of the Americans, David Daliberti, 41, was experiencing chest pains and that he and William Barloon, 39, should be released immediately for humanitarian reasons.

The two Americans were sentenced to eight years in prison after crossing the border from Kuwait five weeks ago in what Washington called a harmless mistake.

In Kuwait, Mr. Barloon's wife Linda said she was notified Monday that the State Department obtained "clearance" for the visit but refused to say when she would go.

"I am very pleased that the Iraqi government has granted us the visas," Mrs. Barloon told the Associated Press. "I'm very much looking forward to the opportunity of

seeing my husband. I'm hopeful to be allowed to meet with Iraqi officials."

Mr. Daliberti's wife Kathy, who has maintained communications with the press via the Internet, said she is in Jacksonville, Florida, preparing to go to her husband.

"Any announcement regarding a trip by me to Iraq will be posted here, first, when I do have plans to go and if it is appropriate to announce the trip in advance," she said in her latest posting, dated Saturday.

Iraq officially broke relations with the United States on Feb. 8, 1991, during the U.S.-led air war to punish Iraq's attempt to annex Kuwait by force. Land forces of a U.N. coalition joining more than 30 countries invaded at the end of that month and drove the Iraqis out in four days.

Mr. Krystosik has tried to see the Americans daily. Last week, he was informed that his weekly visits had been cut back to every two weeks. He last visited the Americans almost two weeks ago.

The Polish diplomat will accompany the wives throughout their stay in Iraq. The women will be housed in the old U.S. embassy, which is under Polish control.

Iraq blames the United States for blocking efforts to ease U.N. economic sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

EU: Turkey must make solid moves on reform

BRUSSELS (R) — Turkey must quickly show real progress on economic and political reforms if it is to persuade the European Parliament to agree to a customs union with the European Union (EU), the EU's foreign affairs commissioner said on Monday.

"It is fair to say that it is not a foregone conclusion that the customs union will enter into force next January," Hans van den Broek told a seminar on EU relations with Turkey.

"Success will require vigorous action not only by the Turkish government but also certainly by the grand national assembly to pass the economic legislation and the constitutional and legal changes needed to ensure approval of our ambitious joint project by the European Parliament," he said.

The parliament has threatened to veto the customs union plan, agreed in principle by EU and Turkish foreign ministers early last month, unless Ankara cleans up its act on human rights.

Mr. Van den Broek said he hoped the key elements of Turkey's programme of constitutional and legal reforms could be put through the grand national assembly before its summer recess, as a way of proving the country's good intentions.

"The European Parliament will be asked, in the early autumn, to give its assent to

the customs union. But parliament's assent will only be forthcoming if its members feel that Turkey and the union are committed to the same fundamental values," he said.

In carefully measured words, the commissioner also urged Turkey to pull its troops out of northern Iraq where they have been hunting fighters from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) to the general outrage of the international community.

"The continual attacks by the PKK, which have claimed countless innocent lives, are utterly reprehensible... but it is clear that the problems in the south-east of the country cannot be solved by military means alone," Mr. Van den Broek said.

"I therefore expect the troop withdrawals to be completed as quickly as possible," he added.

But he stressed that the customs union could not be allowed to founder because Turkey and the EU were important trading partners.

The country was a model of a secular government in the Muslim World and as a NATO ally it was in a key geographic position in the Mediterranean, linking Europe to Asia.

"It is absolutely unacceptable that the customs union fails," he said. "Turkey and the European Union are vital to each other."

Another name added to list of 'missing' in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Hasan Ocak locked up his clothing shop in Istanbul's Lalali area and called his sister to say he would buy some fish and be home for the Kurdish new year festival.

That was on March 21. His family has not seen him since. Mr. Ocak had suddenly joined the ranks of Turkey's "missing" — hundreds of people who have disappeared without trace, some believed killed by the security forces while in detention.

But the Interior Ministry, responding to a campaign by his family, friends, human rights groups and the Turkish media to find him, said on Sunday he was not detained by security forces.

The last person known to have seen him alive is an extremely thin and pale Suna Yasar. She says they were both tortured in the Aksaray detention centre in Istanbul.

"I was tortured several times so I do not exactly remember the date... I was being taken back to my cell. I felt someone near me. I stole a glance under my blindfold and saw Hasan," she told

Reuters after being freed from 11 days in detention. "Hasan was semi-conscious and limp," Ms. Yasar said as she and others staged a hunger strike in Ankara on Ocak's behalf.

Another prisoner, Baki Duzgun, released a statement through his lawyer saying he saw Ocak in Aksaray detention centre on March 23, that he had head injuries and had apparently been tortured.

Mr. Ocak disappeared during a security crackdown after 17 people died in rioting which flared in Istanbul when unknown gunmen fired on coffee shops of the minority Alevi liberal Muslim sect. His family are Kurdish Alevis who migrated from eastern Turkey.

Ms. Yasar was seized on March 25 in Istanbul's Gazi district in a swoop on alleged provocateurs behind the rioting.

The president of Turkey's human rights association, Akin Birdal, fears Ocak is dead and is pressing for information.

The association lists 328 cases of missing people in 1994.

"We believe that the majority of these people have been killed by the security forces or police," Mr. Birdal told Reuters.

Thirty-two people, including Ocak, are known to have disappeared in Istanbul in March, he said.

Diplomats said Ocak's case had a significance beyond the agony of his family as the European Parliament is demanding that Ankara improve its human rights record before it ratifies a key customs pact between Turkey and the European Union (EU).

Frieder Birzele, interior minister of the German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, raised Ocak's case with Turkish Human Rights Minister Algan Hacaloglu, who said he was investigating.

The Turkish cabinet discussed the case on Friday. "The government has a political responsibility to bring this matter to light," state minister Ziya Halis told the cabinet.

"This kind of incident... causes a loss of prestige for the state both on a national and international scale and damages people's faith in the security forces and justice," Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, eager to draw Turkey closer to the EU, has promised a "democratisation package" of reforms.

The U.S. State Department said the human rights situation in Turkey worsened significantly in 1994, a view echoed by Amnesty International.

It said the banned Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and the Islamic Hizbullah were behind some "missing" cases. But it accused the government of only infrequently prosecuting security officers for "extrajudicial killings, torture and other abuses."

Turkey's human rights association is so alarmed at the rising numbers of missing that it has issued leaflets telling people what to do if they are seized on the streets.

"Shout and call out your name, telephone number and address to the people in the street," the leaflet says.

Wiretapping exposes Israeli media war

TEL AVIV (AP) — The edition of Israel's two leading dailies are being held by police on suspicion on ordering illegal wiretaps against each other, and possibly senior government and military officials, as part of a no-holds-barred circulation war.

Dozens of police on Monday swept through the headquarters of Yediot Ahronot, Israel's leading daily, carting away crates of documents and detaining publisher Arnon Mozes, editor-in-chief Moshe Vardi and his deputy Ruti Ben-Ari for questioning.

Offer Nimrodi, editor-in-chief of Yediot's main competitor, Maariv, has been under arrest since Saturday on suspicion of illegal wiretapping.

"It's a black day for journalism," said Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni Monday.

She said she hoped the crackdown would lead to wider understanding that "not everything is permitted — bugging, photographing, infringement on the private domain."

Although ordering wiretaps is punishable by up to three years in prison, jail sentences are rarely imposed by a judiciary traditionally lenient on the issue.

The arrests climaxed a scandal that broke a year ago when police began investigating private detectives Yaacov Tsur and Rafi Friedman, who have since been indicted for tapping the lines of leading journalists and officials.

Using ultramodern technology, they are believed to have tapped hundreds of telephone, fax and cellular phone lines ranging from President Ezer Weizman to those of leading business figures and even the Shin Bet security service.

Their Israeli-made high-frequency computerised scanner, valued at \$250,000 and designed for military use, was able to lock in on cellular phone lines and decode fax signals.

Police sources, speaking anonymously, said this week that Mr. Tsur had agreed to testify that Mr. Nimrodi was a client and that he had also tried to buy his silence after the investigation began.

The sources said police suspected both Yediot and Maariv used Tsur's Agam Company as well as other detectives, to spy on each other — neither aware of the

competitor's operations.

Another detective, Zeev Laufer, was arrested Monday and charged with spying on Maariv on behalf of Yediot.

The free-wheeling tabloid account for a combined three-fourths of the Hebrew daily newspaper market, with estimated circulation of 300,000 for Yediot and 150,000 for Maariv.

In recent years, they have waged an increasingly aggressive circulation war, giving away cars to readers, reporting on each other's managerial embarrassments and competing for journalists.

Maariv also adopted Yediot's tabloid format and red-ink banner headlines, and in recent months front pages were often virtually identical, promoting speculation of spying.

Amos Schocken, publisher of the highbrow Haaretz daily, called on police to do "everything in their power to get to the truth."

Mr. Vardi, the Yediot editor, arrived at the national serious crimes division headquarters near Tel Aviv clutching a nylon bag containing clothes, a toothbrush and sandwiches.

"I'm sorry you've been waiting in the scorching sun on my account," Mr. Vardi told reporters as he emerged from a police car.

Mr. Nimrodi was arrested Saturday night at Ben Gurion international airport as he prepared to go to Zurich. On Sunday, a magistrate's court ordered him held for a week while the investigation continued. Under Israel's system, a suspect can be detained up to 30 days before formal charges are filed.

Mr. Nimrodi, 35, is the son of Yaacov Nimrodi, an arms dealer who was Israel's military attaché in Iran in the 1960s and subsequently made a fortune in trade between Israel and the Shah of Iran's regime. The Nimrodi family bought Maariv three years ago after the death of its previous owner, British media tycoon Robert Maxwell.

Moshe Negbi, Maariv's legal commentator, said if the allegations against Mr. Nimrodi were proven correct he would have to resign whatever the legal consequences.

Mr. Negbi said the excesses highlighted the dangers inherent in a highly centralised press now virtually controlled by three men — Mr. Nimrodi, Mr. Mozes and Mr. Schocken.

Libya lashes Israel, U.S. on nuclear treaty

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Libya on Monday lashed out at Israel for its nuclear weapons programme and the United States for supporting it while Arab states were put under sanctions.

In an address to a conference to extend the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Libya's U.N. ambassador, Mohammad Azawi, said his country could not agree to an extension of the treaty unless Israel was forced to renounce its nuclear weapons programme, which he estimated had more than 200 bombs.

"Our position should not be interpreted as an abandonment of the aims and purposes of the treaty," he said.

"What makes the whole situation more offensive is that (Israel) enjoys the support and encouragement of the world's only superpower, which has at the same time

imposed on us an economic, military and education blockade and is trying to deny us the right even to possess knives and stones and deceive us to accept a peace similar to that between the wolf and the lamb."

The Security Council has imposed an air, arms and diplomatic embargo as well as a ban on some oil-related equipment against Libya for not handing over suspects allegedly involved in the bombing of a Pan Am airliner.

Mr. Azawi said the West turned a blind eye to Israel's nuclear programme, but strictly monitored Arab countries such as Libya.

"They raise hell when an Arab country builds a small chemical or pharmaceutical factory," he said, with "accusations of possessing chemical and biological weapons although they know full well the falsehood of what they reiterate."

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 The Finestones
14:30 Hot Shots
15:00 Breakman's World
15:00 Movies, Comics, and Videos
16:00 Amazing Stories
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 Les Jumeaux du Bout du Monde
17:30 Tarzan
18:00 News in French
19:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
19:45 E-M6
20:00 The Marvellous Machine
21:00 Berlin Break
22:00 News in English
22:30 Prison
22:40 Dandelion Dead
23:10 Keeping Up Appearance

PRAYER TIMES
04:27 Fajr
05:51 (Sunrise) Duha
12:33 Dhuhr
16:12 Asr
19:16 Maghreb
20:40 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swethill, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630831, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 623236
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624022
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate weather conditions with prevail with temperatures around average and clouds appearing at low altitudes. Winds will be northwesterly moderate to active becoming easterly moderate in the afternoon. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp. Amman 10/24
Aqaba 16/31
Deserts 8/28
Jordan Valley 14/32

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 22, Aqaba 29. Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Salah Al-Ustad 849028
Dr. Riza Abu Zaid 842095
Dr. Issam Al-Azzam 890504
Dr. Yousef Raheb 896301
Fires pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 785336
Al Asena pharmacy 637035
Najib pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

AMMAN:
Dr. Fayed Al-Qadi 248743
Al-Qadi pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Khalil Abu Hussein 985000
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 677777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 601000
Repairs 623101
Abdai Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Radio Authority 681000
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Al-Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Sunbeid 664714
Shamsi Hospital 660131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mashar Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdai 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdai 664164/6
Al-Badr, J. Ashraf 775111/26
Army, J. Ashraf 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 851199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905600
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)586732
Al-Hilal Modern Hospital (09)990900
BAGHDAD:
Princess Banna Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)533005, 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:45 Amman (RJ)
08:30 Amman (RJ)
11:30 Amman, New York (RJ)
11:35 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:50 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:05 Istanbul (RJ)
12:10 Colombo (RJ)
12:40 Amman, Cairo (RJ)
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Home News



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday distributes a diploma to one of the 254 nurses and midwives who graduated from the Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery, Institute of Specialised Nursing and the Clinical Instructor Programme of the Ministry of Health (Photo by Crystal)

Queen graduates 254 nurses, midwives; opens calligraphy exhibition

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday distributed diplomas to 254 nurses and midwives who graduated from the Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery, Institute of Specialised Nursing and the Clinical Instructor Programme of the Ministry of Health. The ceremony took place at the Royal Palace of Culture, where the Queen also opened an exhibition of calligraphy by the late King Hussein.

The Queen commended the students on their achievements and the Ministry of Health for the diverse medical specialties flourishing in Jordan under its care.

On behalf of the graduates, Imam Husani thanked Queen Noor for her continuous support, which has raised the fields of nursing and midwifery to their present high standards. At the ceremony, the Italian ambassador to Jordan, Romano Bettini, the Italian ambassador to Jordan, emphasised the importance of the 30 years of cooperation between Jordan and Italy in the realm of social development and commended the Clinical Instructor Programme, which is part of an Italian health project that also includes a gift from the Italian government: the new public hospital in Karak.

Later that day, Queen Noor, who is a Patron of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, opened an exhibition of contemporary calligraphy at the National Museum of Fine Arts, which was founded by the society in 1980.

The exhibition, which features the work of artists from the Islamic world, will run for one month.

The Queen concluded her visit by opening the National Museum's gift shop which was mainly funded by a grant from USAID. The gift shop sells works of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Silsal, Burqan and Hazem Zabi as well as art books, posters and greeting cards.

Queen Noor was received by Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal, the president of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, and the society's board members.

The Queen was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal. The opening was attended also by Their Royal Highnesses Princess Majda, Princess Rajwa Bint Ali and Princess Nafsa Bint Ali.

Celebrating the nature of Dana through hand-crafted silver jewellery

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For architect, artist and nature conservationist Amar Khammash and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) celebrating the environment is by no means confined to Earth Week.

Committed to preserving the rich geology, flora, fauna and archaeology of Jordan's wondrous Dana region, their aim is not only to promote awareness and appreciation, but the socio-economic development of the area's local population as well.

All of these ambitions are coming together with a current exhibition of silver jewellery at Darat Al Fanun in Jabal Weibdeh.

The exhibition includes finely crafted silver pieces artistically displayed in a re-created natural environment which will surely conjure images of Dana's exquisite beauty.

Delicate silver pins, inspired by the wide variety of plants and trees found in the area, are nestled in dried branches from the region. Looking at the ornate pieces, designed by Mr. Khammash and executed by Jordanian silversmith, Mahmoud Saoudi, popular, oleander and oak leaves are just a few of the region's treasures which are immediately identifiable to the visitor.

In addition, the silver reproductions of just a handful of Dana's nearly 600 plant species — some of which are in danger of extinction — incorporates real fragments of nature such as almonds, acorns and Dana stones.

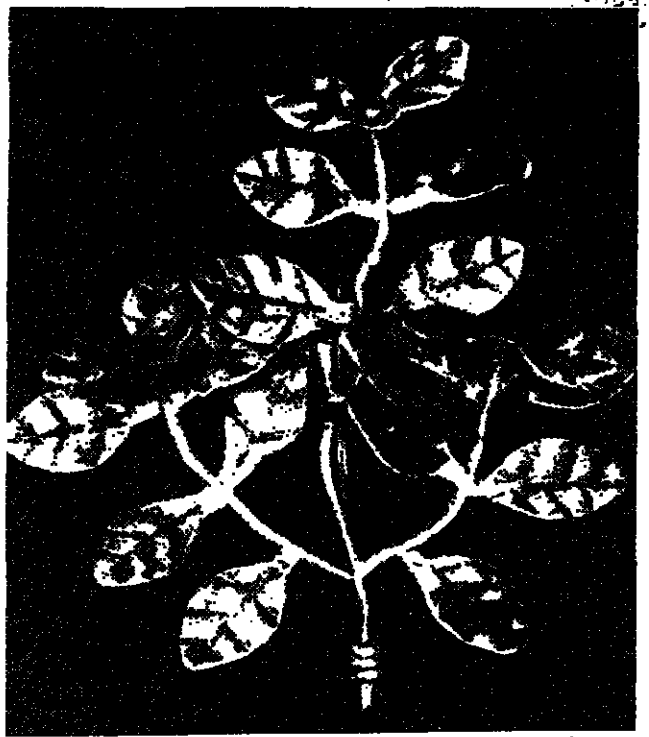
The Dana stone, as it is referred to by those familiar with the nature reserve there, is a semi-precious stone unique to the region.

According to Mr. Khammash, the stone, while turquoise in colour is actually a natural blend of three or four semi-precious stones.

"We call it Dana stone because we want to make it pin this special stone to the collection to the region and the reserves so it can be identified with the conservation ethic," Mr. Khammash said. "The next line of jewelry will feature sliced Dana stones."

Although Mr. Khammash is actively involved in the work of the RSCN and its efforts to preserve Dana, he admits that he was one of the first to discover the stone's diversity.

"I attribute bringing it to public prominence



Hand-crafted silver brooch by Amar Khammash for "Fragments of Nature" exhibition

to Anis Muasher, president and founder of the RSCN.

"It was really his encounter with the landscapes and his knowledge of the area which brought attention to the semi-precious stones and the natural diversity Dana," he said.

The silver exhibition highlighting the "Fragments of Nature" is just the first step in a much larger project. Jewellery project is laying the foundation for the production of hand-crafted pieces in silver inspired by the geology, archaeology and wildlife of Dana.

Currently, plans are under way for the opening of a local workshop and training programme to teach the women of Dana to reproduce the region's natural beauty through silver work.

The project, supported by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the RSCN, is headed by ecologist Chris Johnson.

In the past, conservation philosophy was seen to clash and in some cases did clash with local development. This marks a fresh beginning of the exact opposite," said Mr. Khammash. "That's because 10 years ago conservation never looked at human development. Man is important and man's well-being is important to nature. Combining craft to the conservation of nature is the glue that makes it all work."

According to Rebecca Sal-

Jordan ready to assist PNA in bilateral transport and communications affairs

By Jennifer Hamarneh Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At the first meeting over transport and communications between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) emphasis was placed on seeking direct cooperation between the two sides, without involving Israel, a Jordanian official present at Tuesday's meeting said.

The official told the Jordan Times that as transport and communications affairs between the PNA and Jordan were the business of these two parties alone, Israel had no jurisdiction in involving itself in such matters. Thus, he said, the meeting took up issues of direct coordination between Jordan and the PNA.

At the meeting, headed on the Jordanian side by Director General of the Jordanian Ports Corporation Dureid Mahasneh, and on the PNA side by Director of Transport Mahmoud

Qawasmi, Dr. Mahasneh said Jordan was fully prepared to offer assistance to the PNA in transport affairs and would set up facilities for the passage of goods and travellers between Jordan and the Palestinian lands.

The Ports Corporation chief said brotherly relations make it incumbent on Jordan to move towards promoting smooth and unencumbered transport between the two sides because of their common interests.

Dr. Mahasneh told the Jordan Times that the development of related regulations was necessary because until today, no regulations on transport between the two sides have existed. He cited as examples the issuance of drivers' licences and the passage of trucks from either side to encourage trade as areas requiring some form of regulatory supervision. Dr. Mahasneh added that at a



Jordanian Ports Corporation Director General Dureid Mahasneh (centre left) and Palestinian National Authority Director of Transport Mahmoud Qawasmi (Petra photo)

later stage, discussions will take up other transport-related issues such as aviation and maritime affairs.

At the meeting Mr. Qawasmi said his team was hoping to ensure facilities for trade and transit between the two banks of the Jordan River and cooperation in the field of meteorology and the movement of tourist buses transporting visitors to and from either side.

The two parties created sub-committees which would work out a general framework for a land transport agreement between the two countries.

University ends inquiry into campus clashes

Those responsible will be penalised severely — official

By Rana Hussein Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Investigations by the University of Jordan administration into the April 5 clashes at the university's campus in which dozens of students were injured concluded Tuesday, and university officials said tough measures would be taken against the perpetrators of the incident.

More than 110 students were questioned by the committee appointed by the university administration following the clashes. The results of the committee's inquiries will be announced soon, a university official said.

versity of Jordan students were involved in the brawl.

According to the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, the prosecutor general of Sweileh has questioned dozens of people suspected of involvement in the university clashes.

"We are conducting secret investigations and questioning individuals we suspect may have been involved in the university clashes," the source said.

He added that the prosecutor general has been questioning witnesses as well as suspects, and it will take few days before the investigations end.

The source however declined comment on whether any suspects were apprehended by the authorities in connection with the brawl.

"At this time we cannot reveal any facts until our investigations are over," the source said adding that some recent newspaper reports regarding the apprehension of individuals was inaccurate.

"The information published in some newspapers concerning the number of people detained was not specific, and we cannot release any figures until the questioning is completed," said the official.

Israeli Arabs arrive on way to Mecca

SOUTH SHUNEH (Petra) — Israeli Arabs heading for Mecca for this year's pilgrimage Tuesday arrived at the South Shuneh Pilgrims Centre and were welcomed by Jordanian officials.

Rafiq Khatib, director of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs' Department responsible for Al Aqsa Mosque, said the government had made arrangements to host the 1,700 travellers at the pilgrims city set up in Ghor Nimrin, within the South Shuneh district.

Mr. Khatib, who was among the officials welcoming the pilgrims, said that 56 air-conditioned buses were made available to the pilgrims along with a religious guide to escort them to Mecca and to Jordan.

Noting that the Israeli Arabs were to have arrived earlier than Tuesday, Mr. Khatib said that the delay was the result of obstacles and difficulties encountered in securing visas for the pilgrims from the Saudi Arabian embassy in Amman.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs said Tuesday that it was organising a farewell ceremony Wednesday to see off Jordanian pilgrims travelling by land to Saudi Arabia for the Haj.

Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi will head Jordanian officials in bidding farewell to the pilgrims.

Princess Sarvath attends YWMA sports festival for the handicapped

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan Tuesday attended a sports festival for the handicapped organised by the Young Women's Muslim Association (YWMA) at the headquarters of the Jordanian Sports Federation.

Princess Sarvath watched several events and competitions by the young athletes and distributed medals and trophies to the winning teams.

His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the chief chamberlain, delivered an address at the outset of the festival, paying tribute to the Young Women's Muslim Association's special education services for the rehabilitation of handicapped children.

The ambassadors of Pakistan and Japan, Ali Naqvi and Yuji Ikeda, were among the invited guests at the festival.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

- JEWELLERY DISPLAY**
 - An exhibition of jewellery inspired by the nature of Dhana (designed by Amar Khammash in cooperation with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature) at Darat Al Fanun.
- EXHIBITION**
 - Exhibition of painting by Lebanese artist Karim Al Hage at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - Exhibition of plastic art by several Jordanian artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
 - Exhibition of paintings by Mahmoud Sadeq at Alfa Art Gallery.
 - Photography exhibition entitled "Fuentes de la Memoria" at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).
 - Exhibition of paintings by Samer Oussama at the French Cultural Centre.
 - A collection of photos of Middle East doors by Julia Reinhold at the Gallery, off the main lobby, Inter-Continental Hotel.
 - Exhibition of art by Moroccan artist Farid Belkhabia at Darat Al Fanun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
 - Exhibition of graphic works by Rafiq Lahham at Darat Al Fanun. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.
- FILM**
 - Film entitled "On the Buses" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.
 - Film entitled "Convey" at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 12:00 noon and 9:00 p.m.
- CONCERT**
 - Concert by Tomas Boborquez and Victor Angel Gil in cooperation with the Jordan Music Academy (playing violin and piano) at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre) at 8:00 p.m.
- POETRY RECITAL**
 - Poetry recital by Ghassan Zaqtan, Abdul Qadir Al Humud, Ali Ameri, Jiryes Samawi, and Ahmad Hijazi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.
- LECTURE**
 - Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "Towards a Better Understanding of the Health of Gums and Teeth" by dentist Abdul Fattah Al Bustani at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:30 p.m.

Yemeni police team visits PSD

AMMAN (Petra) — Public Security Department (PSD) Assistant Director for Operations and Planning Major-General Najib Batayneh Tuesday received a Yemeni police delegation and told its members Jordan was ready to help the Yemeni police force upgrade its performance. Major-General Batayneh said Jordan stands ready to offer expertise to the Yemeni police force and to exchange training programmes with it. Director of the Yemeni Immigration and Travel Documents Department Colonel Abdullah Al Bishawi, who is heading the delegation, said the team's visit to Jordan aims to benefit from the advanced Jordanian experience in police work, programmes used to combat crimes and drug trafficking and to regulate residency permits and border crossings.

CONDOLENCES OPEN

Condolence book opens at U.S. Embassy for Victims of Oklahoma City bombing

In memorial of the victims who died and were injured in the recent Oklahoma City bombing, a condolence book will be open at U.S. Embassy in Abdoun, from 0900 - 1600 in the USIS American Centre entrance from Wednesday, April 26 through Wednesday May 3, 1995

Rival French camps vie for Le Pen voters

Chirac wants to meet Balladur

PARIS (R) — Conservative French presidential candidate Jacques Chirac, in a conciliatory gesture aimed at uniting the divided right, agreed Tuesday to meet his defeated fellow Gaullist rival, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

His campaign spokesman Francois Baroin told reporters Mr. Chirac "will be happy to meet the prime minister... as soon as possible to discuss ways of barring the road to the Socialist candidate."

Relations between Mr. Chirac and Mr. Balladur have been icy for months since it became clear that the prime minister, who owed his appointment in 1993 to the Paris mayor's support, would run against him for president.

They have not met privately for months, exchanging tense handshakes and small talk on the rare occasions when their public duties forced them to appear together.

Mr. Balladur made the first move, endorsing Mr. Chirac unreservedly for the May 7 run-off against Socialist Lionel Jospin as soon as the results of the first round became known Sunday night.

Mr. Baroin told a news conference that some Balladur supporters might take part in Chirac rallies, adding: "There are no longer Balladurians and Chiracians: today there are only people who identify with the coalition and support Jacques Chirac."

The rival camps in France's presidential election vied for the votes of extreme-rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen Tuesday while insisting they would make no deal with his anti-

immigration National Front. Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin, surprise leader after last Sunday's first ballot, said the left had to win back a popular electorate that registered its concerns by voting for Le Pen.

At a rally in the southern town of Valence Monday night, Mr. Jospin described Le Pen voters as "men and women who should be with us."

He added: "To ensure that there are not two Frances, we have to unite people... we will have to make proposals addressed to all the French people."

Praised unusually by Mr. Le Pen Monday as honest and respectable, the Socialist candidate said citizens should have closer protection from police to counter crime, a major concern of Front voters along with immigration.

Hardline Interior Minister Charles Pasqua made a naked pitch for the National Front vote by urging conservative candidate Jacques Chirac to propose partial proportional representation for parliamentary elections.

The measure, which Mr. Chirac has not so far advocated, is a key Le Pen demand that could give his party a central role in national political life, where it has little power despite his 15 per cent of last Sunday's vote.

Mr. Pasqua, who switched allegiance to Mr. Chirac after his own candidate, Mr. Balladur, was eliminated, vowed his own measures to restrict immigration and the granting of French citizenship.

"France wants to be governed on the right," Mr. Pasqua said, paraphrasing a famous 1974 saying of ex-

President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing that France wanted to be governed in the centre.

"When Jean-Marie Le Pen scores 15 per cent, there is a political problem and it must be resolved," Mr. Pasqua said.

But two senior Chirac supporters, National Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin and Enterprise Minister Alain Madelin, insisted Tuesday that the Gaullist candidate would not change his campaign message to seduce the far-right.

"There is no wink to the National Front," Mr. Seguin said.

Tension between the Gaullists and the National Front erupted into violence in a television studio — but off camera — on Monday night when the Gaullist mayor of the Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret, Patrick Balkany, slapped National Front politician Jean-Yves Le Gallou in the face.

Mr. Le Gallou had earlier referred in an angry debate to allegations of corruption at the regional housing authority which Mr. Balkany heads. Mr. Le Gallou said he would file a complaint to the justice authorities. Mr. Balkany said he got what he deserved.

Mr. Jospin and Mr. Chirac agreed to a televised debate on May 2, five days before the run-off to find a successor to Socialist Francois Mitterrand, the CSA broadcasting watchdog said.

Mr. Jospin was first to hit the campaign trail after polling 23.3 per cent to Mr. Chirac's 20.8. He acknowledged that Mr. Chirac remained the "mathematical"

favourite to win the May 7 run-off but said the momentum was now on his side.

Despite buoyant opinion poll predictions, RPR politicians have cautioned that victory for Mr. Chirac in the final May 7 run-off round is far from certain.

Mr. Seguin said on television that "if we (in the party) do not do what we have to do for Jacques Chirac, victory for Lionel Jospin is quite possible."

Foreign Minister Alain Juppe ruled out any electoral pact with the National Front, saying that "that issue is long since cut and dried."

"Mr. Le Pen has made his choice. He hates Jacques Chirac and has shown admiration" for Mr. Jospin, Mr. Juppe added.

Mr. Seguin, meanwhile, said that if Mr. Jospin became president, "he would be elected by the National Front, with all the consequences that implies."

Mr. Le Pen's political constituency is far more complex than commonly assumed, and includes a significant element of traditionally left-wing, mainly former Communist voters.

The director for French think tank, Pascal Perrineau, said that 35 per cent of Le Pen's electorate came from the unemployed and that 23 per cent were working class.

In an interview Tuesday with the financial daily Tribune Desosses, Mr. Perrineau said Mr. Chirac's support in the same sectors was 12 per cent and 18 per cent, indicating that Le Pen's electorate could split between left and right in the second round.



French Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin salutes supporters in the southern town of Valence during his first campaign meeting after the first round of elections. Mr. Jospin, who led the first round, will face neo-Gaullist conservative Jacques Chirac in the second round of voting on May 7 (AFP photo)

Kozyrev warns U.S. against short-range missile plan

NEW YORK (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said Tuesday that a U.S. short-range missile defence system could slow progress on disarmament agreements and undermine the U.S.-Russian partnership.

In an interview published in Tuesday's New York Times, Mr. Kozyrev voiced concern with moves in Congress and the White House to continue research into an enhanced anti-missile system capable of destroying short-range weapons.

He said that before Washington and Moscow could move on to discuss a third strategic arms treaty, START III, Russians had to be sure there would be no new arms race in weapons of a new class.

He said his government also needed assurances that the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty would not be undermined by the development of

a defence system against short-to-medium range missiles.

Arms control experts said that upgraded or new generations of U.S. missile defence systems move closer to being capable of attacking longer-range missiles and alarm Russian lawmakers who have to ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II).

Mr. Kozyrev said recent talks between Washington and Moscow on the issue have helped to create better understanding.

U.S. officials said the talks have stalled over the permitted speed of the new missiles as well as the speed and range of incoming targets they would attack.

Mr. Kozyrev praised START I, which went into effect last December, for freeing the world of the nuclear threat.

"For the first time ever, I flew from Moscow to New York feeling free from being targeted by my own missiles. And going back, I am sure also that I am not targeted by American missiles," said Mr. Kozyrev who was in New York to attend a United Nations conference on renewing the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Mr. Kozyrev praised the NPT and gave Russia's strong support for its indefinite and unconditional extension.

The foreign minister also praised U.S. President Bill Clinton for deciding to attend the May 8 Victory in Europe Day ceremonies in Moscow.

"It is very important to recognise that it was absolutely the right decision to go to Moscow," Mr. Kozyrev said. "That recognises the historical value of the victory we achieved together. We were allies. This is very important for the future."

Arizona film location destroyed by fire

TUCSON, Ariz. (R) — Most of the old Tucson movie set, where the late John Wayne and other cowboy actors made films, was destroyed by fire late Monday. Tucson fire officials said about 300 employees and thousands of tourists were evacuated when flames raged through dry lumber buildings and burned dangerously close to a 10,000 gallon propane storage tank. There were no injuries, firemen said. Backfires were set to protect the propane tank and a building where a large quantity of black gunpowder used by actors in simulated shootouts was stored.

Bardot seeks closure of dolphin show

PARIS (AP) — Brigitte Bardot's animal rights foundation has demanded the closure of a dolphin show at a Paris-area theme park, saying one of the sea mammals there had just died of depression. The Bardot Foundation, headed by the former film star who is now France's leading animal rights activist, said the remaining dolphins at Asterix park should be released from captivity and returned to a natural environment. There was no immediate comment from management of the theme park, located north of Paris. The Bardot Foundation said a female dolphin brought to the theme park in 1988 died earlier this month from depression due to her captivity. It said two other dolphins died in 1993 just before delivering babies.

Friends, relatives still love Lucy

NEW YORK (AP) — We still love Lucy. To mark the sixth anniversary of the April 26, 1989, death of comedian Lucille Ball, Woman's World magazine interviewed friends, relatives and admirers. "Lucy paved the way for women like me," said Roseanne, a popular U.S. actress and comedienne. "She was the first genuine female star on TV that men took seriously." Her son, Desi Arnaz Jr., said she tried to keep family life "simple and real" even though much of it revolved around a sound stage. "She had a lot of old-fashioned values. She told me all along that what's important in this life is to be happy and to have a good relationship with somebody."

Upfront proposal on behind

LONDON (AP) — When Paul Armstrong decided to propose to Connie Norman, he got down on his knees. And then some. Armstrong had "Connie, will you marry me?" tattooed on his buttocks. The 24-year-old shoe designer said Monday that he popped the question by asking Ms. Norman, his girlfriend of four years, to give him a backrub. He murmured "lower... lower" until she got the message. When she agreed, he brought out more conventional paraphernalia: a ring and a bottle of champagne. Mr. Armstrong, from Somerset in England's southwest, said his unmitigated cheek risked the bum's rush. "Connie hates tattoos," he admitted to Britain's Press Association. "Having it tattooed just added a bit more risk." No risk, Ms. Norman, a 22-year-old teacher told PA. "How could I say no after all that?"

Barbecues, bikinis herald unusual warm spell

MOSCOW (AP) — Barbecue season has begun, bikinis are out in force and swimmers have started flocking to the Moscow River. Is this Moscow or Maui? A record-setting April warm spell has catapulted the Russian capital from the tail-end of winter into what feels like summer for the last week. Every day has set a new record, with the temperature Monday again reaching the mid-20s Celsius (mid-70s Fahrenheit). On Sunday, the Russian Orthodox Easter, Muscovites who a year ago were still coping with ice and snow headed to parks, riversbanks and dachas in great numbers, enjoying the sunbathing weather while it lasts. Smoke wafted into the sky from "shashlik" cookouts and grass fires, and long-absent green grass continued to overtake the city's dirt and grime.

Sri Lanka mounts offensive against rebels

COLOMBO (AFP) — Elite police commandos launched a fresh operation against Tamil Tiger rebels in eastern Sri Lanka Tuesday as security forces braced for more attacks in the absence of fresh peace moves, officials said.

Special Task Force (STF) commandos advanced towards a key jungle base of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Ampara district but there were no immediate reports of casualties, a military official said.

He said several limited scale operations were also being launched elsewhere in order to regain the advantage the army had lost during a three-month truce from which the Tigers withdrew on Wednesday and resumed their separatist war.

"In certain places where we dominated almost a kilometre ahead of our defence lines, we had to pull back to 100 metres in line with the (truce) agreement. Now we will try to get back lost ground," the official said.

He said a group of about 30 to 40 Tigers launched a pre-dawn attack against an army camp in eastern Batticaloa district but troops were able to beat it off without suffering casualties.

In another clash in the island's north, troops ambushed a group of Tigers, killed one and recovered a T-56 automatic rifle and three grenades, the official said adding that the LTTE had killed two civilians in the region.

The Tigers blew up a bridge in the northwestern Chetukulam region cutting off the main road link to territory they held.

The latest violence took the death toll to 73 in renewed fighting which erupted after the LTTE pulled out of the truce agreed to on Jan. 8 and began attacking security forces in Tamil-dominated northern and eastern regions.

The Tigers are leading a guerrilla campaign to establish an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's two million Tamil minority. More than 30,000 people have been killed during their 23 year old struggle.

Defence sources said the military's move to shift its main operational headquarters closer to the battle zone over the weekend was an indication that more fighting was to come.

Left gains, Berlusconi slips in regional vote

ROME (AFP) — Former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party was beaten into second place by the former communist Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) in Italy's regional elections, final results from the Interior Ministry showed Tuesday.

The media magnate's party received 22.4 per cent of the vote Sunday against 24.6 per cent for the PDS, with the far-right National Alliance third with 14.1 per cent.

When political alliances are taken into account, the left and right finished virtually even in the elections in 15 of Italy's 20 regions.

The Freedom Alliance grouping Forza Italia, the National Alliance and the Christian Democrat Centre (4.2 per cent) gathered a total 40.7 per cent of the vote, while the centre-left got a combined 40.5 per cent.

Berlusconi resigned in December when his coalition with the National Alliance and the federalist Northern League collapsed. The country has since been run by a government of technocrats under Prime Minister Lamberto Dini.

The final results contradicted polls which at first declared Mr. Berlusconi's Freedom Alliance the clear winner with nearly 45 per cent of the vote, only for that to crumble as more results came in.

Far from sweeping up nine regions, as it wanted, alliance

won only six as against nine for the left and centre-left groups.

The daily La Stampa Tuesday led criticism of opinion polls which had forecast a clear victory for Forza Italia. "Betrayed by the polls. The Italians were the victims of a massive disinformation programme," the newspaper wrote.

Mr. Berlusconi admitted that the PDS had progressed but said it "will not please the 75 per cent of Italians who don't want to be ruled by communists." He also noted that five regions, including conservative Sicily, had not voted.

Mr. Berlusconi said late Monday that he would call on President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to hold early general elections to reflect the changed political landscape in Italy.

National Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini had hoped for 18 to 20 per cent of the vote — pollsters predicted 17 per cent — but ended up with 14.1 per cent.

PDS secretary Massimo D'Alema told a press conference Monday the next task was to prepare to defeat Mr. Berlusconi and his allies in legislative elections which could take place in October. Meanwhile, the Refounded Communist Party increased its share of the vote from legislative elections in March last year to 8.4 per cent.

U.K. rebel MPs return to ruling party's ranks

LONDON (R) — Seven rebel Conservative politicians accepted Prime Minister John Major's peace overtures Tuesday and rejoined the parliamentary party, but they remained defiant despite ending a five month feud.

Their decision ends a damaging split in the party just nine days before local elections in England and Wales, when the Conservatives expect to suffer heavy losses.

But the announcement brought little comfort to Mr. Major, who has been in a technical minority in parliament since eight Conservatives rebelled over his policy towards Europe.

Newspapers said his leadership was firmly on the line after his decision to offer the rebels an olive branch, labelling the move a climbdown after pressure from fellow ministers.

Eight members were expelled from the parliamentary party five months ago after defying the government on a key vote on closer links with

Europe.

The seven rebels who returned to the fold Tuesday said they had done so without compromising their principles and they would keep pushing their anti-European views within the party.

The eight rebel, Michael Carttiss, is expected to announce his decision later. A ninth MP, who resigned the parliamentary "whip" in protest at the treatment meted out to his colleagues, is consulting local party officials before making a decision.

Both are expected to agree to return.

"It's obvious our views haven't changed. We are now going to devote ourselves to do everything we can within the parliamentary party's institutions to strengthen policy on Europe," rebel Sir Teddy Taylor told a news conference.

Several rebel MPs, saying their readmission to the party was unconditional, called it a victory for their position.

NATO expansion timetable on course

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is informing Russia at next month's summit in Moscow that the schedule for expanding NATO to incorporate former Soviet allies is on course, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said.

As he met with Poland's new foreign minister, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Mr. Christopher said results of a study on expansion will be presented to Eastern and Central European countries next autumn.

After discussion, the plan, which Mr. Christopher called "a deliberate timetable," will be taken up by the 16 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members in December.

The expansion plan is among several items of discord expected to mark President Bill Clinton's Moscow meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Russia objects to extending NATO to its doorstep.

A spokesman for Morio Kimura, governor of Aomori prefecture, said the freighter Pacific Pintail, carrying 14 tonnes of radioactive waste, could dock Wednesday, one day behind schedule.

"The ship will enter port tomorrow for spot checks," the spokesman told Reuters. Mr. Kimura had barred the ship's entry into this placid northern Japanese port, custom-built to handle a planned series of nuclear-waste shipments, just one hour before it was scheduled to dock early Tuesday morning.

The spokesman said the central government had given in to Mr. Kimura's demands and handed him a written statement promising not to seek permanent burial of the toxic waste in the prefecture, fanned for its apples.

Mr. Kimura relented after the freighter, Pacific Pintail, missed a daylight deadline for handlers to unload the 14 tonnes of highly radioactive waste it is carrying.

The Pacific Pintail will anchor off the port Tuesday night and dock Wednesday at 9 a.m. (2400 GMT Tuesday), said officials of Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd, the cargo's owners.

Mr. Kimura is a member of the opposition Shinshinto group who took office just two months ago. He had warned he would block the freighter at the end of a two-month voyage from France.

Package bomb kills one in California

SACRAMENTO, California (R) — A bomb hidden in a package exploded Monday in an office building in Sacramento, killing a man, officials said.

Police and FBI officials said they believe that the bombing was carried out by the mysterious "unabomber," who has been linked to 15 other explosive devices over 17 years.

"Based on a preliminary assessment of some of the materials, the bomb task force advised me that the similarities strongly suggest it was the work of the Unabomber," Richard Ross, who heads the FBI's Sacramento office, told reporters late Monday.

The bomb exploded at the office of the California Forestry Association, a timber in-

dustry lobbying group, blowing out several windows and doors in the one-storey brick building.

The victim was identified by police as 47-year-old Gilbert Murray, a lobbyist and president of the Forestry Association. He had a wife and three children.

No one else was hurt in the blast at the office.

Fire in northwestern China kills 51

BEIJING (AP) — A fire in an entertainment district has killed 51 people and injured an unconfirmed number of others in the northwestern Chinese city of Urumqi, a local official said Tuesday.

The fire broke out early Monday at a karaoke club in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang province, said an official at the provincial foreign affairs office.

A report in the newspaper Legal Daily quoted police and fire officials as saying the exits from the karaoke hall were blocked and too narrow, preventing the victims from escaping. The club furnishings also had not been made flame retardant, it said.

The fire was the latest in a series that have ravaged dance halls, cinemas and other public gathering places, leading the government to announce a fire prevention campaign.

The rising toll from fires has become something of an embarrassment: last year, a record 2,748 people died and 4,277 people were injured in nearly 40,000 fires.

A Dec. 8 fire in the Xinjiang City of Karamay killed 325 people, most of them children who were trapped inside because all but one exit was locked. A dance hall fire in November killed 288 people under similar circumstances.

Aside from the 51 dead, an unspecified number of people were injured in the Urumqi blaze and sent to local hospitals, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said he could not provide further details.

Meanwhile, a separate report said a forest fire was burning out of control near the southwestern city of Kunming.

Some 4,000 local people had joined firefighters and police to try to contain the blaze, which broke out a week ago, the newspaper Xinmin Evening News reported from Shanghai.

Nuclear waste ship to dock in Japan on Wednesday

MUTSU OGAWARA, Japan (R) — A Japanese provincial governor Tuesday lifted an order blocking a British freighter carrying lethal nuclear waste from docking, ending an embarrassing stand-off with the central government.

A spokesman for Morio Kimura, governor of Aomori prefecture, said the freighter Pacific Pintail, carrying 14 tonnes of radioactive waste, could dock Wednesday, one day behind schedule.

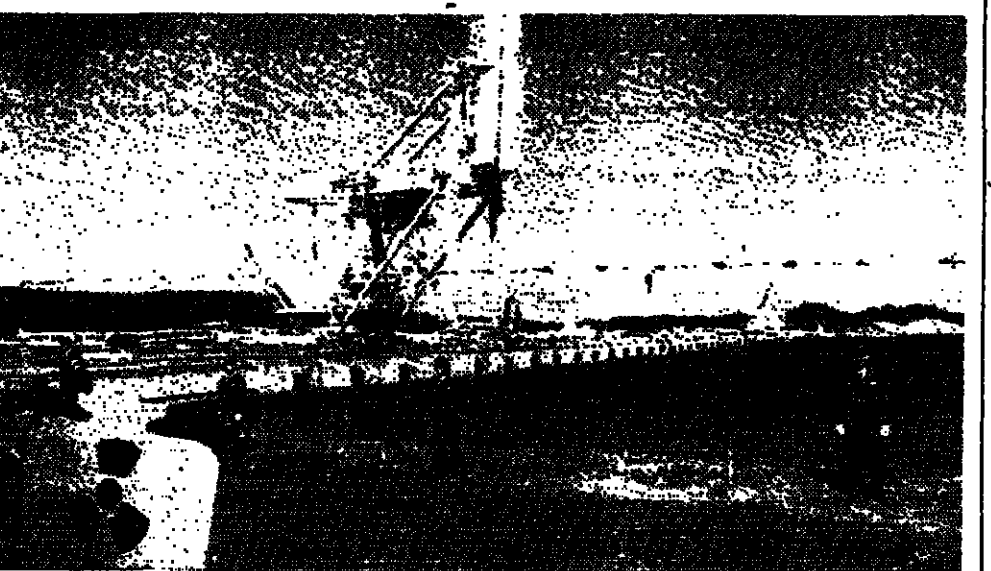
"The ship will enter port tomorrow for spot checks," the spokesman told Reuters.

Mr. Kimura had barred the ship's entry into this placid northern Japanese port, custom-built to handle a planned series of nuclear-waste shipments, just one hour before it was scheduled to dock early Tuesday morning.

The spokesman said the central government had given in to Mr. Kimura's demands and handed him a written statement promising not to seek permanent burial of the toxic waste in the prefecture, fanned for its apples.

Mr. Kimura relented after the freighter, Pacific Pintail, missed a daylight deadline for handlers to unload the 14 tonnes of highly radioactive waste it is carrying.

The Pacific Pintail will anchor off the port Tuesday night and dock Wednesday at 9 a.m. (2400 GMT Tuesday), said officials of Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd, the cargo's owners.



Police guard the wharf of Mutsu-Ogawara Port, Rokkasho, northern Japan. The British freighter Pacific Pintail, which sailed from Cherbourg, France, two months ago with a

load of reprocessed and sealed nuclear waste, is expected to arrive at Mutsu-Ogawara Port Wednesday amid a wave of angry anti-nuclear protesters (AFP photo)

lear Fuel Ltd, the cargo's owners.

Mr. Kimura is a member of the opposition Shinshinto group who took office just two months ago. He had warned he would block the freighter at the end of a two-month voyage from France.

His adamant stand clearly caught the central government off guard. "We very much regret governor Kimura's decision," said a chagrined Makiko Tanaka, head of the central government's

Science and Technology Agency.

Under the terms of a treaty between Japan, Britain and France, the nuclear waste, produced at a French reprocessing plant where spent Japanese uranium fuel was reprocessed into plutonium, must be stored in Japan.

The waste, mixed with glass and encased in 28 stainless steel canisters, was to have been stored for 50 years at a special cooling facility at the village of Rokkasho, near Mutsu Ogawara, and then

buried at an unspecified location.

It is a mix of highly radioactive material such as strontium, which has a half-life of several million years. Nuclear industry sources said the ship had nowhere else to go because Rokkasho was the only existing storage facility.

Anti-nuclear activists at the port were clearly delighted. "We fully support the government's decision," a spokesman for

Shelling, artillery duels rock Bosnia as truce deadline nears

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مجلس النشر يومية عربية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية في الاردن

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Tools for right use

THE NEW amendments to the Traffic Law that have just been approved by the Cabinet cannot be the solution to our woes on the road since their purpose seems to be only that of making certain violations more prohibitive than others. The primary reason why this country still suffers from unusually high rate of road accidents is not that our law-enforcement authorities dish out light sentences for traffic violators. The real reasons for the chaos on the streets, dare we say, lie in the double standards, laxity and selectivity that law enforcers pursue in doing their job.

To begin with, traffic police have to employ one standard in dealing with violators. They cannot continue to impose or withhold fines according to the "wasta" system that is being followed practically in every sector of life. So before we change the law, necessary as the change may be, let us try to enforce the existing legislation across the board.

Secondly, our traffic police seem to continue to target inconsequential traffic violations such as parking at the expense of the more serious crimes such as not halting at stop signs. We are not going to succeed in ending the carnage on the roads, even after the amendments are passed, if the authorities do not get their priorities right.

Thirdly, what we need is the cultivation of a sensible driving culture that cannot be nurtured solely by stiffening fines or applying stricter rules. Parallel with making reckless driving habits more costly, there is always a pressing need to educate people not only on safe driving habits but also on courteous and defensive driving as well. Other countries with wider and deeper experiences with traffic problems have made it mandatory for violators to go back to driving schools and attend many days of classes and lectures on how to operate their automobiles properly before their licences are revalidated or returned. While we admit there is no magic wand to make Jordanian drivers better, safer and more courteous, we still feel that the concerned authorities have yet to achieve their end of the bargain.

In the final analysis, there is no escape from the conclusion that we need to find both the will and the way before we can dream of ending the traffic nightmare. Tough laws are indeed tools that can be used to solve a particular problem in a society like ours. But equally important is the need to create a mental and practical framework in which these tools can be used properly and efficiently in the service of the cause.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Rai Arabic Daily Tuesday criticised the government for practising a policy of appointing retired military and civilian personnel to new jobs and leaving tens of thousands of citizens seeking jobs for the first time in their life. Honsi Ayyesh said that the government has been in the practice of exercising pressure on public institutions like the Social Security Corporation, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company to employ retired personnel who receive pension from the Government Pension Fund or the Social Security Corporation. In some cases, these retired and reemployed persons form 20 per cent of the total number of employees in such public institutions, said the writer. It is not unusual for any retired person to seek work but it is unjust to see the government trying to help the retired persons who receive pension and leave thousands of youth unemployed, continued the writer. If the pension given to the retired persons is not sufficient, why has the government put them on retirement in the first place? asked the writer. He said that in view of the high rate of unemployment in Jordan, the government ought to find solutions to the plight of the job seekers and leave the pensioners to try to get other jobs through their own efforts and in private business.

ANOTHER COLUMNIST in Al Rai daily criticised the Israeli government for failing to live up to the declaration of principles with the Palestinians and for continuing a policy that is aggravating the deterioration in the security situation in the occupied Arab lands. The Israelis demand that the donor nations honour their commitments and provide the Palestine National Authority (PNA) with the promised funds to carry out essential infrastructure projects. But Israel itself does not show any sign of committing itself to implementing its own pledges to the Palestinian people, said Mahmoud Rimawi. By withdrawing their forces from the occupied lands, by releasing detained Palestinians and organising the Palestinian elections, the Israelis can defuse tension, he said. By trying to trigger civil war in Gaza and by continuing their aggressive policies against the Palestinians, said the writer, the Israelis are committing acts of terrorism.

Washington Watch

Terrorism and Racism

By Dr. James Zogby

IT IS ONE o'clock a.m. and I am on my way to CNN to do an interview on Arab-American fears of a backlash in the wake of the terrorist attack in Oklahoma City.

It has been an exhausting day. From the moment news of the blast reached us, my office and those of other Arab-American groups in Washington were caught in a maelstrom.

Like all Americans, we were outraged by the cowardly attack on our fellow Americans. All day we watched the scope of the tragedy grow. Our sense of loss mixed with our sense of horror.

The media, being what it is in the U.S., covered the Oklahoma City bombing all day. To fill the time, they invited many so-called "experts" and commentators to speculate about the attack. And that's when the ugly tragedy took a cruel turn for Arab and Muslim Americans.

As early as 11:30 a.m. Eastern time (only 1½ hours after the explosion), former Oklahoma congressman Dave McCurdy speculated that Muslims or another Middle East group may well have perpetrated the attack. There is, he noted, a large and active Middle Eastern community in Oklahoma (actually untrue: There are roughly 300 Arab-American families in the state) and that they are known to support radical causes. Only after saying this did he catch himself — too late of course — and said that "we should not jump to conclusions," but of course he already had. (A chilling footnote to this that Mr. McCurdy was a finalist for the job of CIA director in the Clinton administration.)

Throughout the day this sense repeated itself. When calls from the media asked for my reaction to the killings, I challenged them: "Why are you calling me? What else would my response be but total condemnation of this act which took so many innocent lives?"

Most Arab-American and American Muslim groups issued statements condemning the act. I hesitated, and my thinking was simple. Of course we are not supportive of this or any criminal act. But what of those who will immediately speculate when they see such a statement that we (Arab-Americans) must somehow be the first to condemn the attack out of guilt or fear of being implicated.

At 8 p.m., after a number of statements and calls from the rest of the Arab-American and Muslim groups, I went to the studio to do my weekly television programme, "A Capital View." Our topic, of course, was the bombing, and my guest was Father Sean McManus, an Irish-American leader. His community, like ours, feels the pain and frustration of guilt by implication.

The show has a call-in segment, and Arab-Americans from all over the country called in to express their anger and outrage over the attack and the loss of life and their anger at all the "experts" who have implicated our community in this heinous act.

The most poignant calls came from Arab-Americans in

Oklahoma City. They responded first and foremost as Oklahomans hurt and grieving for their neighbours and friends who were killed and wounded in the attack. "Oklahoma has always been home to us," they noted with pride.

I reached home at 10 p.m. but the calls continued to come in from the media and other Arab-Americans. The former were asking for a reaction, and the latter wanted to discuss what we should do as a community.

Yet another interview, to say one more time that I condemn the attack and grieve for the loss of life, as if some other reaction might be expected of me. At that studio I will explain one more time that Arab-Americans and American Muslims have nothing to do with such criminals acts, and that of course we condemn the attack unequivocally no matter who the perpetrators might be. And to warn the media that it must take responsibility for not speculating too casually.

There are, of course, many lessons to be learned from such a day.

Primary among those lessons is the fact that terrorism is always cruel and stupid. As President Clinton put it, it was "cowardly and evil." And just as the speculation by "experts" who implicate a community without evidence is racist, terrorism is equally racist. Terrorism takes lives without reason, as if they had no value.

In any and every instance of terrorism, there is no justification for taking the lives of those who end up as victims. The innocent die in part because they were at the wrong place at the wrong time. But they also die for the simple, racial, reason of who they are.

This is not war. This is racist crime malevolently at work. Arab Muslims worshippers in Hebron were shot to death because they were Arabs, Israelis at bus stops were killed because they were Israeli, and Americans in the World Trade Centre were killed because they were Americans.

None of those killed through terrorist acts have committed any crime — indeed, because they are essentially random victims, the terrorists don't have any real idea of who they are killing. There is no cause to justify such executions.

Baruch Goldstein was known to have complained about a friend of his who was slain by an Arab. But none of the worshippers in the Hebron Mosque were the perpetrators of that act. Goldstein simply killed "Arabs." Similarly, whatever argument the group which blew up the World Trade Centre had with the American government, their victims were innocent of any act against that group. They were simply Americans.

That brings me to my next point. Just as there are no authentic connections between the legitimate grievances of a people and the act of the terrorist, the act of a terrorist should not in any way diminish the legitimate grievances of a

people. There is no real connection between these two things.

To use a concrete example, U.S. postal workers have a long history of grievances based on the difficulty of their jobs. In a number of instances, deranged individual postal workers have gone into their work places and killed their superiors and others who happened to be nearby. Though by no means common, the phrase "disgruntled postal worker" has become a standard description for such individuals. But do such acts in any way diminish the legitimate grievances of postal workers? And, more directly, do the hideous acts of murder by deranged workers do anything to ease the working conditions of the surviving colleagues? The answers are a self-evident "no."

Terrorism solves nothing. All it does is weaken, in the minds of those who survive, the concern they may have come to feel for the pain of the group which the terrorists purport to represent. That is why terrorism must be universally condemned. It takes innocent lives and brings a heightened sense of danger to everyone on both sides of the line.

This brings me to my final observation. The perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing are still not known, yet speculation is rampant that it was committed by "Middle Easterners" or "Muslims" or "Arabs." Such speculation is both dangerous and in itself injurious to the act it assumes are guilty, as it is both a product of and a contributor to a biased stereotype. But it is also based on the tragic and ugly fact that there are some Arabs and Muslims who have carried out such acts in the names of "Arabism" or "Islam," just as there are those who, in the names of those causes, continue to make stupid and evil threats to carry out such acts. Such criminals and would be criminals do their part to feed and create the very bias of which they complain.

I remember observing when the World Trade Centre was bombed back in 1993, that if it was in fact an Arab or Muslim who was responsible for the act, that the victims would extend beyond those killed and wounded in the bombing and those whose lives became subject to fear.

The criminals in New York have made victims of us all. They are in prison, where they belong. We are in a different kind of prison and we, too, are paying for their crime. They have accomplished nothing but wounding and killing innocent people and handing our political enemies a weapon they can use against us.

To the Oklahoma bombing, I reacted with pain and horror like all my fellow Americans; but I, like all Arab Americans and American Muslims, had to take time from grief and outrage to defend our communities. That is wrong. But given the dangerous mix of racism and terrorism that was how I was forced to spend my day.

Pro-Zionist lobbies behind campaign to demonise Arabs, Muslims

U.S. media and anti-Arab 'experts' immediately blamed Arabs and Muslims for the Oklahoma bombing despite the lack of any evidence to support their claims

By G.H. Jansen

THE VERY real dangers in the propagandistic and deliberate demonising of a person and a community came out into the open in the immediate aftermath of the Oklahoma bombing. The assumption was made, very widely, that it was the work of "Islamic terrorism", though there was never a scrap of supporting evidence for that accusation.

This assumption was transformed into an accusation within the first hours of the devastating explosion at Oklahoma City and soon became a brainwashing campaign. Such campaigns can be easily and quickly mounted because the U.S. media, much less independent than it claims to be, is heavily influenced, if not controlled, by American Zionists who are pro-Israel and anti-Arab and anti-Islamic. This means that demonising, or brainwashing, usually involves the introduction of a Middle Eastern context for any "terrorist" outrage, though in the case of the Oklahoma bombing, many other possibilities were cited — but not stressed, including drug dealers and people seeking revenge for the Waco cult massacre by U.S. federal agents two years, to the day before the Oklahoma incident.

Demonisation has its political purposes. Iraq was demonised before the Gulf war and Iran is being demonised now, before what could be a repeat of "Desert Storm" because Iraq and Iran are both very hostile towards Israel-Iraq, after all, shot Scud missiles into Israel during that war. From the start of the Oklahoma bombing it was clear that this was a terrorist attack on a U.S. government target which would produce many dead and wounded and would, therefore, create much hostility against the culprits. Hence,

from the start the blame had to be placed on "Islamic terrorists" to demonise them even further than had already been done during the preceding few years.

Accordingly and from the start, "terrorist specialists" mostly clearly pro-Israeli, would give it as their weighty opinion that there was a remarkable similarity between the Oklahoma bombing and those carried out by "Islamic terrorists" on the American embassy in Beirut, on Jewish community centres in Buenos Aires and London and, particularly, on the World Trade Centre in New York two years ago, which, as it happens, were all said to be carried out by "Islamic terrorists".

These specialists would add, in a show of fairness, that they were not making any direct accusation against any group but the resemblances were curious — were they not?

A kick-start was given to this campaign by no less a person than William Perry, the U.S. Secretary of defence, who, talking about the bombing, threw in a reference to an "Islamic front", about which nobody knows anything or even if it exists at all. This oblique approach prevailed throughout the campaign: no direct accusation, but even as part of a denial that there was yet any clear culprit, there would come a mention of "Hamas" and "Islamic Jihad" and of "Beirut".

The finest example of this indirect accusation was given by the senior White House correspondent of a major U.S. television network who, conceding that "Islamic terrorism" trail had gone cold because of lack of hard evidence, and because the inquiry was already closing in on two white American men who had been linked to the bomb-truck, went on to add

that there had not been any earlier example of "Islamic terrorists" hiring white men to carry out their bombings. Thus, drawing another false trail across the track.

This line of distracting misinformation was supported by a former CIA official when he said, "don't forget the IRA turned to the Libyans when they needed help." Implying, perhaps, that any "terrorist" culprits could expect similar assistance.

The investigators abandoned the "Islamic terrorist" theory only slowly and reluctantly because they wanted to believe that the bombers were Muslim Arabs and not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. It is much easier, psychologically, for Americans to blame the "enemy without" for such a terrible act than the "enemy within", for whom they must account.

The British government gave a strong boost to the demonising campaign when, quite unnecessarily, it announced that the British police had returned to New York a "Jordanian-American" who had arrived from Chicago — a city in the same general direction as Oklahoma city and that his baggage, which had been sent to Rome, had been opened there and found to contain what could be bomb-making equipment.

Unfortunately for the demonising campaigners, within 12 hours of this man's detention it was announced by the U.S. police that he had cooperated fully with his accusers and had been found unconnected to the bombing and released. Soon after this it was announced from Rome that the "equipment" found in the luggage had nothing to do with "bomb-making". But the linkage with the Middle East had been emphasised once again. Unfortunately, the Isla-

mic groups particularly targeted by the demonisers, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, made things worse when, very stupidly and soon after the bombing, they put out statements condemning it and stating that they had nothing to do with it.

The results of all this anti-Islamic insinuation and innuendo, though completely baseless, set off a wave of anti-Islamic and anti-Arab hysteria right across the U.S., which lasted for 48 hours. Anybody of "Middle Eastern appearance", that is with a brown skin, was questioned and harassed; the offices of Arab-American associations were swamped by phoned-in death and bomb threats as also Arab-American individuals; Arab-Americans going to mosques were abused and intimidated and the same thing along with personal harassment happened to Arab-American women if they were wearing anything that identified them as Arab, even if they were innocently shopping in a supermarket. It was in a mild, non-violent way a reign of terror which started spontaneously and all over the country and though baseless and hysterical was nevertheless frightening to innocent people.

It made no difference if — as testified to by James Zogby, a well-known Arab-American leader, that this community in Oklahoma, which particularly came under pressure, was small, integrated, law-abiding and not politically involved. Its members, like Arab-Americans everywhere, discovered that even after being in the U.S. for three or even four generations, they were still regarded as aliens, and hostile ones at that. And all thanks to clever, persistent pro-Israel and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim propaganda.

LETTERS

Doing business in the Middle East and the regional summit in Amman

To the Editor:

THE HARVARD Business School and the John F. Kennedy School of Government on April 2-4 invited about 300 business managers and government officials from the Middle East, the Arab World, Europe and the U.S. to a seminar to examine business opportunities in the area.

As usual, one would expect that the three-day meeting was extremely well-prepared and well-attended. The various sessions were designed to explore various issues, such as new markets and competitors, government relations, finances, agriculture and communications.

The conferees were addressed by various politicians and business managers from different parts of the world who did not fail to promote their own country at length in front of this important gathering.

I sincerely believe that Jordan was not well presented in this conference. Not only was our number small (six out of 293 attendees, five of whom were private business people and one government official), we were out numbered by other Arab brethren who, ironically, were more forthcoming and friendly with Israeli business managers although they do not have any political relations with Israel.

One message that one could detect in the seminar is that some people are trying to eliminate Jordan's role in the economic development of this region.

What some of my Jordanian colleagues and myself found very distressing was that the Jordanian government representative who was given an excellent opportunity to talk about the Middle East and North Africa economic summit, which will be held in Amman later this year, failed to explain the goals and objectives expected from the summit.

This missed opportunity would have also been an excellent one to promote Jordan's role in the region by giving details about our various free zones and the facilities they provide as well as to talk about how foreign companies can participate in the Amman Stock Market and to give more details about the various companies and financial groups which trade in this market.

His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan always talk at length about the forthcoming summit in Amman during their visits to foreign countries and discuss it intensively with foreign dignitaries who visit Jordan.

In fact both His Majesty and His Royal Highness have been the major driving force behind this forthcoming important summit.

I believe people who will be in charge of preparing for this meeting should have all the goals needed to be achieved clearly identified in order for the meeting to be successful. We do not want to end up talking only about the good spirit of the summit and how hospitable the Jordanians are.

The projects, which we should concentrate on, should involve human resources development, utilisation of raw materials in joint ventures (if possible), which are both labour intensive and high-tech. That would enhance our exports capability by allowing us to penetrate new markets which have demand for our new/existing produce. Such projects could make Jordan a regional centre.

The task of our representatives in charge of preparing this summit is quite immense and we wish them all the luck in making it successful.

Hussam Deranich,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

News

By Dr. James Zogby

By Thomas Goltz

Slaughter of the innocent

Drug-taking Russian troops massacre women and children in Chechen town

THERE WAS nothing much to distinguish Samashki from the dozens of other settlements of little red brick houses in the west of Chechnya. The high street was usually two inches deep in mud and the side roads so rutted they were better negotiated by tractor than by car. But for 15,000 farmers and small artisans it was home. Until recently.

For three long nights the town was pummeled by a barrage of fire from heavy guns. Then came the Russian soldiers, 3,000 of them, spraying shells from their tanks and armoured cars and tossing grenades indiscriminately into basements. The town was captured. But for survivors of the initial assault, the nightmare had just begun.

Old people were gunned down without mercy as they emerged from cellars looking for water. Young men, whose only crime was that they were of fighting age, were beaten, tortured and executed. Many of the killers appeared to have been on drugs: needles and syringes littered the streets.

Nobody knows for sure how many people died in the Russian storming of Samashki, but international aid workers have estimated

the death toll at 250, at the very least. Local people believe it is much higher, saying up to 300 were gunned down outside the town by Russian helicopters as they tried to flee through the surrounding forest.

Whatever the final total, it was without doubt one of the bloodiest chapters in the brutal civil war unleashed by President Boris Yeltsin last December, when he sent his army into Chechnya to curb its bid to break away from Russia. The Russians seemed to have singled out Samashki to show their ability to break the Chechen will to resist.

"The excessive use of force against a defenceless, surrounded village is nothing less than genocide," said Alexander Guryanov, a Russian human rights activist. "It is clear we are talking about hundreds of dead, most of whom were women and children and old people killed like vermin while hiding in cellars."

Coming less than a month before the Kremlin leader is due to meet John

Major and other Western leaders in Moscow, it will prove a big embarrassment for him in his attempt to prove to the world that the worst violence in the troubled Caucasian region is over.

Survivors of the assault last week described appalling acts of violence. "When the bombardment began we hid in the cellar and when it stopped the soldiers came in hunting us," said Bekist Abdullayeva, 54, exhaustion written on her face.

Tanks and armoured vehicles closed our streets and then started shooting, shooting and shooting, destroying and then burning each house on the street as they went along. When they came to our house, we screamed at them that there were no men with us in the cellar but they threw their lemons (hand grenades) in anyway. Her three daughters were killed in the blast.

Her neighbour, 39-year-old Raisa Guseinova, lost her seven-year-old son, Yusef. She said he was snatched from her arms by

a band of "doped-up laughing soldiers" and thrown under the treads of an advancing T-72 battle tank. Then the soldiers demanded she set fire to the remains of her house by igniting a pile of petrol-soaked pillows and bedding. When she was unable to do it, the soldiers completed the job for her.

Rana Ahmedova's father, a mechanic, was shot as he tried to dive for cover into the pit in which he used to work under his car. He was wounded by the shots, but they dragged him out, splashed him with petrol and burned him alive. Her mother and brother were killed as well, adding to the eight graves at the back of her shattered house. Rana had begged for mercy. "Please," she had screamed, "there are no soldiers here." But the Russians laughed and kept on killing.

So it went on. Such tales are all too familiar in a war which has been marked by atrocities on both sides. But these words carried particular weight for me: Bekist

and the others were my friends.

I had been living for several weeks in Samashki working on a television documentary, but the bombardment had caught me 10 miles away in Sleptovsk, on the border with neighbouring Ingushetia, where the shockwaves of the bombings sounded like distant drum rolls.

Like other foreigners, I was prevented by the Russians from coming back to Samashki until Thursday. It was a full week since the army had begun their all-out assault on the town, but the soldiers had made little attempt to clear up the evidence of the massacre.

Lying on one street was the decomposing body of a 50-year-old man, abandoned and unclaimed where he had fallen. I thought I knew him, but could not be sure because of his shattered face.

girls to reveal blackened bone and ash before taking them off to the local cemetery.

Survivors were busy at work digging or filling more than 100 fresh graves. It was the first day the Russians had allowed them to bury their dead in family plots. Until then, they had used back yards and gardens. I counted at least 40 mounds of mud in the houses that I visited. Friends told me there were many more graves behind other houses in town.

There was something strangely irregular about the destruction. Some of the streets of Samashki were completely flattened but others nearby had escaped almost unscathed, save a few rocket holes in the roofs of the houses.

The roll-call of the dead was made up almost entirely of the elderly, the helpless and the young. According to my friends in the town, not one of Chechnya's feared pro-independence fighters was killed or taken prisoner. There could not have been,

for the simple reason that not one of them was still in Samashki when the soldiers arrived.

Akhmed Amayev, one of the town elders, told me in a hushed and frightened voice within earshot of a group of Russian soldiers, how he and 11 other locals had negotiated the surrender of Samashki 10 days ago. "In exchange for our demilitarising the town and allowing an armoured train to pass unmolested, the Russian commander promised not to attack," he said. "We were to be allowed a local police force of 20 armed men. All other militants were to leave the town — or else."

The fighters had been justifiably suspicious. But after intense discussions, they had left Samashki along with their arsenal of several heavy machineguns, a number of automatic rifles, shotguns and old hunting rifles. As a token of good faith, the elders even handed over eight Kalashnikovs to the main Russian post before allowing the train to enter the town.

Later that evening, the Russian command gave the elders two hours to find and deliver an additional 264 weapons or face a massive air and land bombardment. "We were frantic because most of the fighting men had already left," he recalled bitterly. "We managed to collect 16 or so guns but then the bombardment began."

Official Russian media portrayed Samashki as a hotbed of armed resistance. But in the weeks I spent in the village, support for President Dzhokhar Dudayev and hatred of the Russian army seemed no stronger than elsewhere in the breakaway region.

Even after the killing had ended last week, the torment went on. While my friends were burying their dead in the cemetery, drunken or drugged Russian soldiers about a mile away were letting off distant volleys of gunfire above their heads.

"Samashki is dead," said Fatima Alikanova, 70, the matron of the house where I had stayed for most of my time in the village. She embraced me and wept.

Her son, Ussam, corrected her. "It is not just Samashki," he said. "The whole of Chechnya is dead."

Sunday Times

NEWS IN BRIEF

Labour Day holiday announced

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries, government departments and public institutions will be closed on Monday May 1 in observance of Labour Day, a communiqué issued Tuesday by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker said.

'RJ to fly Libyan pilgrims to Jeddah'

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Royal Jordanian (RJ) airlines will fly Libyan pilgrims to Saudi Arabia to help a U.N.-backed Egyptian airlift of Muslims to Mecca, the company's office here said Tuesday. A spokesman in Tripoli said the airline would make 10 flights from Saturday to assist Egypt Air, which has been permitted to fly 6,000 Libyans to Saudi Arabia under a United Nations exemption to the international embargo on Libya. But in Amman, the Jordanian company's commercial department and a senior manager denied the report. It was unclear whether the airline had been given U.N. permission to take part in the airlift.

3 Jordanians held after Philippine attack

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine police have arrested what they describe as three Jordanians and a Filipino in connections with a hand-grenade attack on a Roman Catholic church in the southern Philippines in 1993, the official Philippine News Agency (PNA) said Tuesday. Nedial Saleh Qab, Mohammed Jubran and his brother Ahmad Jubran, along with a Filipino suspect, Ismael Luningkit Ali, were detained in the southern city of Davao following police raids which uncovered explosives at their homes, PNA said. It quoted police as saying the four were being held as the primary suspects in the Dec. 26, 1993 grenade attack in Davao's San Pedro Cathedral, in which six churchgoers were killed and 150 were injured. Chief Superintendent Edgar Galante told reporters the Jordanians were members of Al Qaeda, an Islamic group waging a war against the secular government of Egypt, PNA reported. It said the Jubran brothers owned a drugstore in Davao while Qab, who is married to a Filipina, is a medical student.

Israel accuses Arab of spying

TEL AVIV (R) — An Arab Israeli appeared in a Tel Aviv court on Tuesday on charges of spying for the Palestinian self-rule authority, Israeli security sources said. The man, Talal Abu Rabie, born in the Gaza Strip town of Deir Al Balah and now a citizen of Israel, allegedly worked for the Israeli Shin Bet secret police. He is accused of giving information on Shin Bet operations to Palestinian security forces while visiting relatives to Gaza four months ago. He also allegedly agreed to work for the self-rule authority as a spy against Israel. Mr. Abu Rabie denied all charges.

Iran mocks failed U.S. attempt

TEHRAN (R) — Thousands demonstrated in Tehran and other Iranian cities on Tuesday to mark the 15th anniversary of a bungled U.S. attempt to rescue American hostages which Tehran Radio and heralded the decline of "the great satan." The operation to rescue 52 American diplomats and servicemen held hostage in the U.S. embassy in Tehran was aborted after a helicopter collided with a transport aircraft, killing eight U.S. servicemen, during a sandstorm in a desert location in central Iran. Tehran Radio said Tuesday's demonstrators were led by people on motorcycles carrying Iranian flags. They marched past the building which had housed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and then held a rally outside parliament. Similar marches took place in other cities, the radio said.

Woman, ex-husband arrested for affair

DUBAI (AFP) — Police arrested a woman and her ex-husband in a hotel room on charges they were having an affair, a newspaper in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said. Under questioning, the two told police that they had been "intimate" nearly two months ago and that the 21-year-old woman was illegally pregnant, the Gulf News said. The arrests in Dubai occurred after the women's parents had told police that their daughter had disappeared and that they believed she was with her ex-husband, the English-language paper said without giving more details.

Britain, Syria call for closer trade ties

DAMASCUS (AFP) — British Construction Minister Lord Ullswater and his Syrian counterpart Majed Ezzi Rihbani called Tuesday for closer trade ties between their countries after talks here, officials said. Mr. Ullswater, leading Britain's first trade delegation to Syria for 10 years, was exploring opportunities for British construction and consulting companies during a three-day visit. Mr. Rihbani said economic liberalisation, giving Syrian and foreign investors greater chance to use foreign exchange and tax-free status, had created many opportunities for investment in energy projects and other construction work. "Syria is encouraging Europeans to come to invest in the economy, agriculture and tourism," he said.

Iraq assembly rejects deal

(Continued from page 1)

Minister Yuri Shafranik wants to develop the West Qurna and North Rumailah fields. "We expect to sign a protocol today," he said.

"They (Russians) are our friends and our relations with them are good," he said, adding the fields could produce one million bpd if developed.

Mr. Jawad said Iraq had reached "a very advanced stage in (striking) deals with French firms to develop Ma'noon and Nahr Omar," fields with an investment of \$7 billion.

France's Total is close to reaching agreement to develop the giant Nahr Omar field with capacity to produce 400,000 bpd if sanctions are lifted. ELF Aquitaine is linked to the 600,000 bpd Ma'noon field, which Iraq says holds 38 billion barrel reserves.

Muasher visits Orient House

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Muasher expressed disappointment about Israel's limping peace talks with the Palestinians.

"A vast majority of Jordanians link (Jordanian) progress with Israel to the Palestinians," Dr. Muasher said.

He said unresolved questions like the future of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, as well as the Kingdom's continuing economic hardship, have dampened Jordanians' enthusiasm for peace.

"We are witnessing a difficult transition period from making peace to actually living it. Jordan had high expectations that the peace treaty would result in economic relief, but many economic benefits the treaty called for have not materialised."

"For example, he said, promised water has not been delivered because there is no money to build a dam.

Under the peace deal, Israel agreed for Jordan to lift an extra 215 million cubic metres of water from regional rivers each year. But to do so, dams would have to be built at a cost of \$300 million and so none of the extra water had been taken.

Even after United States has wiped off Jordan's debt to Washington by the end of the year, Amman will still have a 100 per cent debt to GDP ratio, the envoy said.

Jordan and Israel were working closely with United States and Europe for regional development, and the Amman Economic Conference in October, a year after the historic meeting in Casablanca, was expected to give a huge boost.

Dr. Muasher also complained many Jordanians were being denied visas by Israel. He did not provide more details.

By Grant Peck
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — In the jungles of eastern Burma, opponents of the country's military junta find themselves outmanoeuvred and outgunned. But in Cyberspace, the realm of the internet, the rebels have computer technology on their side.

"The Burmese regime has gotten away with so much because they control the information," said "Strider," the pseudonymous moderator of the burmanet electronic mailing list. "They can't do that anymore."

Armed with computers, modems and internet accounts, hundreds of social and political activists around the globe are waging propaganda wars on the authoritarian regimes of Asia. Groups elsewhere are also active, such as Palestinian opposition to the Israeli occupation and Saudis opposed to King Fahd.

The voices of Asian dissidents circulate via electronic mailing lists, which deliver messages to subscribers quicker and more often than printed publications. The information also is distributed through usenet electronic forums that most internet users can check into at will.

Recently, activists have started electronically archiving their information so it can be read using

Electronic information a weapon in Asia's battles for freedom

internet search tools such as "gopher" and the world wide web.

Because closed societies usually lack the latest technological tools, exiles, patriots and foreign friends are among most of the electronic front lines. But more locals are becoming involved — both as pushers of their causes on the internet and recipients of hitherto unavailable information.

Strider's burmanet mailing list, begun last year, tilts at the military junta that seized power in Rangoon in 1988 and exhibits little inclination to restore democracy.

On a more-or-less daily basis, Burmanet's 250 direct subscribers in 15 countries — and several thousand people who receive its reports via usenet news groups — can read Strider's dispatches culled from Bangkok newspapers, communiques from rebel groups and on-the-spot reporting.

Burmanet's reports are also smuggled on diskettes into Burma where they are printed out and distributed clandestinely. There are no connections to the internet inside Burma.

While communist die-hard North Korea is still off the screen, internet connections in China and Vietnam have expanded recently in tacit concession to the realities of doing business in the

modern world.

China opened its first Internet link just two years ago, and now perhaps a dozen sites are connected. Plans for a domestic educational network, to connect 100 universities in 10 cities by 1996, will extend the links considerably. China's phone company announced April 12 it will begin processing applications for Internet connections in May.

Robin Munro, Hong Kong director of the New York-based group Human Rights Watch-Asia, does not think dissidents inside China make wide use of the Internet. But it is conceivable that "some brave souls log on from time to time," he said.

In Vietnam, a shoestring e-mail operation, Vietnam academic research and educational network, has been joined by a second service, Netnam, "funded by foreign aid money and geared toward international companies," according to the Hanoi newspaper Vietnam Investment Review.

"The Chinese and others want Internet because it is such a valuable business tool," Strider said. "But if they open up to business, they cannot keep out news."

The news is ready and waiting. During the Tiananmen Square democracy movement in 1989, overseas Chinese students and scholars established what is

now possibly the world's largest electronic mailing list, China News Digest.

Fifty volunteers turn out 14 on-line publications under its aegis, which last year were sent out to more than 34,000 e-mail addresses in 43 countries. They provide news of China, as well as academic, social and practical information for overseas Chinese.

Mainstream electronic activism by overseas Vietnamese consists primarily of circulating petitions or raising money for "boat people" refugees and issuing statements of protests over mistreatment of dissidents, said Stephen Denney, a Berkeley, Calif.-based Vietnam scholar active on the Internet.

"Some actively promote improved U.S.-Vietnam relations and exchanges — others seek the overthrow of the Vietnamese government," Mr. Denney said. Burmanet subscribers include virtually every academic involved in Burmese studies, a number of U.S. government officials and the Burmese embassy in Washington, Mr. Strider said.

There was some debate among Burmanet members over allowing the embassy to subscribe. Strider solicited on-line opinions, and in the free-speech tradition of the Internet, the overwhelming consensus was to "let them on."

Reacting to Strider's efforts, the embassy began in December to post news from Burma's state-controlled press on the Internet.

John MacDougall, a former U.S. diplomat who for years has published reports about Indonesia, now also uses the Internet to get out information.

His Indonesia-L mailing list also has an open attitude on information. "The list policy is pluralism," the guidelines say, in an apparent dig at the three-decade-old regime of President Suharto, which claims down regularly on public expressions exhibiting any diversity of opinion.

MacDougall's operation contains both Indonesian and English language materials and draws heavily on other Internet resources, particularly e-mail dial-up networks maintained inside Indonesia by non-governmental organisations.

Strider and MacDougall both use the resources of the San Francisco-based Institute for Global Communications to disseminate their news.

The nonprofit organisation is allied with like-minded groups to provide, it says, "the most extensive global communication network in the world dedicated specifically to serving NGOs and citizen activists working for social change."

New details of suspect emerge

(Continued from page 1)

"It's going to be real grim work," Mr. Keating said.

Mr. Hansen and other officials said rescue crew were literally using buckets — as opposed to heavy machinery — to clear away small chunks of debris in order to keep the bodies of victims as intact as possible.

They estimated search efforts could last into next week.

News organisations meanwhile reported that the jailed suspect in the attack, McVeigh, has refused so far to answer any questions about the bombing.

McVeigh, a 27-year-old former soldier and decorated veteran of the Gulf war, remained stone-faced even when shown photographs of children who were maimed and killed in the blast, the reports said.

The arrest of McVeigh was announced Friday. He had been stopped by police on a traffic violation north of Oklahoma City just 90 minutes after the bomb exploded.

He was then found to be carrying a concealed weapon and was detained. He languished, however, for nearly two days in jail before authorities realised who he was.

McVeigh's mother meanwhile issued a statement saying she had not been in

contact with her son for a long time and expressing condolences over the attack.

"I just want to say I feel deep sympathy for victims and families involved in the Oklahoma City bombing," she said, according to CNN television.

Mark Koernke, a leader in the paramilitary movement whose name had come to light in media reports following the bombings, denied he knew McVeigh and distanced himself from the Oklahoma attack.

"We do not condone what happened in Oklahoma City because that was in fact an act of terrorism," said John Stadtmiller, who, along with Mr. Koernke, hosted a short-wave radio programme Monday.

Mr. Koernke, 37, however, admitted that his group had sent a cryptic fax to a Texas congressman the morning of the bombing that apparently referred to Oklahoma City and a bomb attack.

The fax was at first considered a possible clue to the identities of the attackers.

Mr. Koernke told reporters in Dexter, Michigan on Monday, however, that he had contacted the FBI each day since Saturday and that they had "interest in talking" to him.

Hamas vows revenge for death

(Continued from page 1)

ly treated during interrogation," said a member of the Centre for the Defence of the Individual, an Israeli human rights organisation.

Military officials, who refused to be named, said Harizat was a senior figure in the armed wing of Hamas who was in contact with the three men shot dead by the army in Hebron on April 16.

"My brother was pious and divided his time between work and the mosque," said Abdullah, a 32-year-old shopkeeper in Hebron.

He denied that Harizat was a member of Hamas "or any other organisation."

Abdullah admitted that his brother had been detained by Israel for three months in 1993 and for one month in January this year, but refused to say why.

Using the language of militants, Abdullah said in Arabic: "We will not mourn but rejoice because my brother died a martyr."

Abdullah was allowed to visit Abdul Samad in hospital on Monday and said he was unconscious and had bruises on his head and shoulders.

The justice ministry announced an inquiry into the death.

the 35th Palestinian prisoner to die during or after interrogation since the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule began in 1987.

The Israeli human rights group B'tselem puts the number at only nine, however. The reason for the discrepancy was not clear.

Hanan Ashrawi, who heads the independent Palestinian Commission for Citizen Rights, also said it appeared Harizat was tortured to death and called for international intervention to halt "these policies that are leading to the murder of detainees."

The government-appointed Landau commission ruled in 1987 that Shin Bet interrogators could use "moderate physical pressure" to extract information. Following the recent wave of attacks, Mr. Rabin eased restrictions on interrogations still further as part of a crackdown on Islamic militants.

OPIC — source for financing

(Continued from page 1)

years — at best."

Mr. Finn said OPIC financing is extended on commercial rates, but "we do not compete with commercial banks." He also noted that there was no commercial bank available in the region to help finance many of the projects, which individually cost tens of millions of dollars.

Mr. Finn also explained that a \$75 million pledge that President Bill Clinton made for regional economic development in an Oct. 26 speech to the Jordanian Parliament was going to a "regional equity fund" of \$250 million to help private sector investment.

An American bank is the prime mover behind the

fund, "most of which will be spent in Jordan," said Mr. Finn.

OPIC extends insurance up to 50 per cent of the capital against "political violence, strife and resurrection, expropriation by state," and "inconvertibility of currency."

However, the terms of coverage cannot be general and have to clearly spell out, he said.

While the first two coverages, "political violence, strife and resurrection" and "expropriation by the state" are self-explanatory, "inconvertibility of currency" means the imposition of currency controls by the host governments, thus rendering the investors to convert their profits or capital to foreign exchange.

Economy

New WTO head hails role of developing nations

TOKYO (R) — Renato Ruggiero, the first head of the new World Trade Organisation (WTO), said Tuesday that developing countries should play a bigger role in the global trade body.

"The role that developing countries had — especially the countries of East Asia — in the last recession of industrialised countries has been very important and very positive, so we have to strengthen their participation," he told a news conference.

Mr. Ruggiero, who formally takes office as the WTO's first director-general next Monday, said this was a priority issue that the trade body needed to address.

He was on a three-day visit to Japan to exchange views on trade and economic issues with Japanese government leaders.

Mr. Ruggiero was optimistic on the question of China and Taiwan's membership in the WTO, which has 128 present and pending members.

"I hope that we can find a good solution in good time for both these countries," he said, adding that the applications by the two countries would be treated separately.

China failed to become a WTO member by Jan. 1, when the trade body was launched, because the United States, the European Union and Japan blocked Beijing's bid on the grounds that its half-liberalised economy was not eligible.

Taiwan's early entry into the WTO has been controversial partly because Beijing views Taiwan as a renegade province of China.

On the longstanding dispute over auto trade between Japan and the United States, Mr. Ruggiero said the WTO did not exclude bilateral deliberations as long as the agreement reached extended to other countries.

"The system that we have... is not a system which excludes the bilateral disputes," he said.

Mr. Ruggiero said he hoped a conclusion satisfactory to both parties would be reached. He declined to comment directly on the threat of sanctions by the United States, saying that sometimes strong arguments were made in trade disputes.

Africans call for reforms to bolster tourism

NAIROBI (R) — Zambia's Tourism Minister urged African leaders Monday to speed up economic liberalisation including monetary reforms and easing transport and immigration controls to build tourism between the continent's regions.

The minister, Lieutenant-General Christine Tembo, who is also international board president of the New York-based Africa Travel Association (ATA), said it was imperative for Africans to remove regional barriers to make their countries attractive.

"There are such barriers as immigration, visa, currencies. These things need to be negotiated and resolved to encourage regional tourism. We are following these up through diplomatic channels," he told Reuters.

"There is political will at the moment. Africa has begun to democratise and liberalise. The atmosphere now is much better than three to four years ago. The future appears very bright," he pointed out.

ATA, which mainly promotes Africa as a tourist destination for Americans and Canadians, is holding its 20th congress in Nairobi.

Formed in 1975, ATA draws its membership from many African governments, international airlines, hoteliers, cruise lines, tour operators and travel agents and American tour promoters.

Mr. Tembo said ATA had started to pursue the idea of regionalising the group and hoped that would be achieved by early next year. A secretariat would be set up in Africa and the ATA agenda would be implemented faster, he said.

Kenyan Tourism Minister Katana Ngala complained Africa's image was battered by what he called unbalanced reporting on the continent by the foreign media and called for "complementary and unbiased coverage projecting Africa positively."

Tourism has become the main foreign exchange earner for many African countries, including Kenya. The number of visitors has fallen in recent years because of ethnic conflict in Africa.

Tourism between African countries is minimal because of currency and visa laws in many of the countries.

"The need for greater cooperation on a regional basis is even more pertinent today and the emergency of multi-destination travel calls for such cooperation," Mr. Ngala said.

Egypt committed to selling natural gas to Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Egypt has officially informed Israel of its willingness to sign an agreement for natural gas supplies, Israeli Energy Minister Gonen Segev said Tuesday.

"This is the first time we have had an official Egyptian commitment to sell us gas," Mr. Segev said.

The commitment came in the form of a letter to Mr. Segev from Egyptian Oil Minister Hamdi El Banbi following the Israeli minister's trip to Cairo earlier this month.

In his letter, the Egyptian minister said he expected development plans for the gas fields to be finalised within the next few months.

Mr. Segev said Israel and Egypt hope to sign a memorandum of understanding by the end of 1995 that would regulate quantities and price.

Israel is interested in buying the natural gas equivalent of 2.0 million tonnes of oil from Egypt and hopes supplies will begin before the end of the decade.

The natural gas will be transported to Israel via a pipeline that will run from the gas field in Egypt's Delta region across the Sinai desert to Israel.

On the Egyptian side, Italy's AGIP and Amoco will operate the gas fields and pipeline in conjunction with Egypt's state oil company.

No decision has been taken on who will operate the pipeline on the Israeli side, ministry sources said. Dozens of Israeli and foreign companies have expressed interest in the project.

According to initial estimates, the pipeline will cost about \$500 million.

Mr. Segev also said that negotiations are continuing with other suppliers for natural gas. Israel has been holding talks with Qatar and Turkmenistan.

Egypt is currently Israel's largest supplier of crude oil. Israel buys 2.0 million tonnes a year on a contractual basis and additional quantities of Egyptian crude on the spot market. It imports a total of some 12 million tonnes of oil a year.

Clinton says dollar weakness result of deficit jitters

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — President Clinton says keeping the federal deficit down is the best way to bolster the weak dollar and vows he won't approve tax cuts that threaten the currency's strength.

In an interview with the Des Moines Register published Tuesday, the president attributed the dollar's decline in value against the yen to factors internal to Japan's economy and investor demands for signs that the government is serious about deficit reduction.

"There's all this uncertainty now because a \$200 billion tax cut passed the House with no budget passing to show the deficit will continue to go down," Mr. Clinton said.

"Once the financial markets see that I am serious, that we're not about to have a \$200 billion tax cut and we're certainly not about to have a tax cut... that is basically an add-on to this deficit... then they will stabilise and go forward," he added.

The president told the Register that part of the problem with the dollar, which is down about 18 per cent against the yen from early January levels, lies with Japan.

"Japan has an enormous trade surplus, but they are bringing their money back home because they have some banks and other things that need their money," Mr. Clinton said. "And when that happens, that's going to change the currency values and there's not much... you can do."

OPEC chief demands bigger share of oil market

KUWAIT (R) — OPEC's secretary-general said Monday the group could plunge the oil market into chaos if it abandoned output restraint, urging independent producers who have eroded its share to cooperate to steady prices.

Rilwanu Lukman, in blunt remarks signalling frustration with OPEC's traditional role as market stabiliser, told an oil conference in the Gulf emirate of Kuwait that his 12-member group was losing share to non-OPEC states and this could not continue.

"If, for the sake of argument, OPEC were to forgo its stabilising role and behave in the same way as our friends in non-OPEC, the results are clearly going to be catastrophic," he said.

"The chaos that would ensue would be hard to imagine and all actors in the field would in fact suffer. That is why cooperation is imperative."

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) wanted cooperation with independents to replace attempts to move the market merely through the setting of output accords.

OPEC, which accounts for 76 per cent of world oil reserves but only 41 per cent of world production, has long said it has done its part to prop up the market by freezing its output ceiling at 24.52 million barrels per day since September 1993.

Now it is the turn of independent producers to take some of the responsibility for supporting prices, Mr. Lukman said.

"For decades there has been a gross imbalance in OPEC's reserve base and its share of world output. A perpetuation of this imbalance is not in anyone's long-term interest," he said.

"OPEC has held its output level for the past three years or so to stabilise the market while others continue to increase their levels of production. This situation, which condemns OPEC to a dwindling spiral, cannot of course continue indefinitely," he added.

OPEC had a major role to play in stabilising the market but a sense of equity in sharing the returns had to prevail.

Mr. Lukman also criticised energy taxes plans oil consuming countries as discriminatory and said they could dramatically influence oil demand. Taxes were aimed more at balancing budget deficits in consumer states than protecting the environment.

Many OPEC states, including its Arab Gulf big guns, face budget deficits and cash flow problems due to low oil prices.

Their income from oil exports to the West already accounts for less than one-third of the price paid by consumers. The rest goes mostly in taxes to the governments of consuming states.

Tietmeyer lectures U.S.: Cut your budget deficit to strengthen dollar

WASHINGTON (AFP) — German central bank President Hans Tietmeyer Tuesday said a "reliable" policy to cut the U.S. budget deficit would be the "most important starting point" for durably overcoming the dollar's current weakness.

Mr. Tietmeyer, here for a meeting of finance ministers and central bank presidents from the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrial nations, said a lasting stabilisation of the dollar, the leading reserve currency, "would be in the interest not only of the U.S. but of the world economy."

Addressing a conference of American economists and bankers two hours before the opening of the G-7 talks, he said the U.S. needed to boost domestic public and private saving "as a basis for (an) increasing, and durable prosperity."

While U.S. plans to cut taxes might be important, "it is even more essential to devise and apply... a convincing strategy to reduce budget deficits," Mr. Tietmeyer said.

These deficits were absorbing the greater part of U.S. private saving and had "caused (U.S.) external liabilities to soar" over the past 15 years, he reminded his audience.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin Monday dismissed criticism from most of the other G-7 countries — Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan — for the slow progress of the U.S. fiscal consolidation effort, claiming the U.S. deficit was the lowest in the G-7.

Mr. Tietmeyer, who commented at length on Germany's own pursuit of monetary stability and sound financial management, made it clear that it must be up to each country to put its economic house in order.

"Our prime objective must be to guarantee the soundness of national economic trends and economic policy," he asserted.

The Bundesbank's move to cut interest rates on March 30 was not motivated by the turbulence on the foreign exchanges, he said.

"We did not pursue an exchange rate objective... it was done for domestic reasons" although the Bundesbank viewed the shifts in the value of key currencies as "excessive."

Mr. Tietmeyer said it was "essential" that countries with "undervalued currencies regain greater credibility in the international financial markets."

This, he said, required a "credible" policy approach focussing on "correcting the fundamental problems."

A monetary policy geared to stability was "naturally important," but could not alone solve such fundamental issues as "unduly low saving ratios and structural budget and current account problems," he added.

Mr. Tietmeyer said it was not difficult to finance external deficits through capital inflows as long as the international markets trusted a country's ability and willingness to remedy its problems.

But, "if this confidence evaporates, there may be sudden and dramatic changes in capital flows" and hence in exchange rates, he said, pointing to the Mexican crisis.

The stability of exchange rates was in the long run determined only by the market's confidence in a country's confidence in a currency, Mr. Tietmeyer said.

British growth surges ahead reinforcing interest rates fear

LONDON (R) — Britain's economy grew strongly in the first quarter of the year, surprising analysts who expected it to slow significantly and increasing the prospects of an early rise in interest rates.

Official figures released Tuesday showed gross domestic product rose 0.8 per cent in the first quarter of the year for year-on-year growth of 3.9 per cent.

That compared with economists forecasts of a 0.5 per cent rise in the quarter for a 3.6 per cent year-on-year rise. In the last quarter of 1994 the economy grew 4.2 per cent on the year.

Despite the mixed signals emerging from the economy, growth is still running way ahead of average growth over the past four decades of 2.25 per cent.

To slow it down, the government and central bank look almost certain to push interest rates up again.

"It would now be very surprising indeed if rates did not rise next week," HSBC Greenwell economist Ian Shepherdson said.

"Credibility is at stake for the Bank (of England) and the government and any failure to act after these numbers could prove expensive," he said, warning that the government must continue to make pre-emptive strikes against inflation.

However, the Confederation of British Industry employers organisation was more cautious, saying the authorities should wait for more evidence before moving interest rates.

Shepherdson said. "Credibility is at stake for the Bank (of England) and the government and any failure to act after these numbers could prove expensive," he said, warning that the government must continue to make pre-emptive strikes against inflation.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY APRIL 26, 1995
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be certain to handle financial affairs which are important today and show you are sensible, then later tonight you can socialise with close friends.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) First do something to improve your health and then go after the personal and business aims which mean much to you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Set pace with a new campaign you have worked out today which will take you straight to your goals and you attain them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Confide your aims in a good friend and gain cooperation so they are easier to attain today. Weigh a decision carefully.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get your outside business handled today in a way that you can get ahead very quickly during the day.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) You gain fine new ideas which should be improved today with the advice of bigwigs, so be sure to see to them.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) Get your obligations nicely met during the day today and then get off to new sites tonight. Meet interesting personalities then.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) The spirit of compromise is best with that person who is as stubborn as you. Come to a fine agreement quickly today.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into your work duties enthusiastically early today and they are soon behind you. Socialise with good friends in the evening.

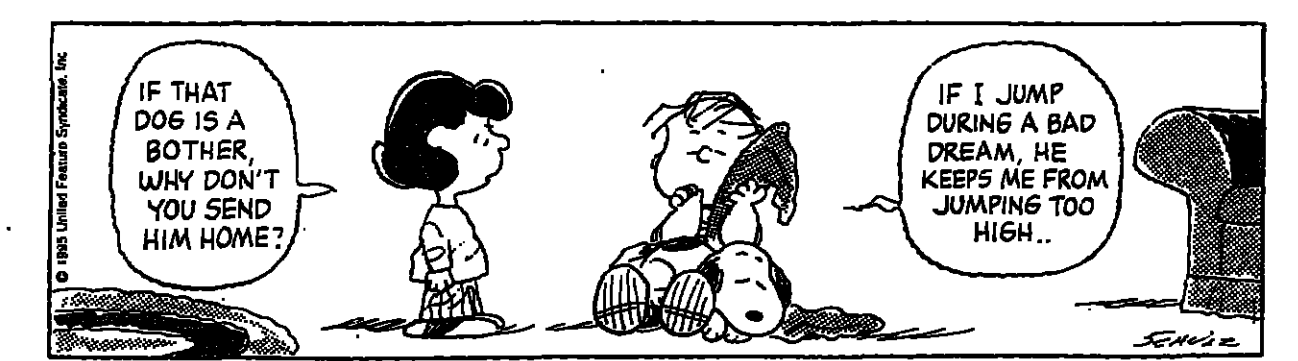
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can enjoy recreation during the day today, and then you can do your activities in the evening for a change.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get into all those fundamental affairs which can improve your way of life during the day today. Relax tonight with close friends and associates.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can gab about and get much completed during the day today, as well as get into new interests. Spend time at home tonight with your mate.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

GIASBERGEN

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Arginton

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KECAD
YUPPP
HERDIT
SNIBAH

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: POISE HABIT SEPTIC MAYHEM
Answer: Why they exercised before going on their cruise — TO GET SHIPSHAPE

THE Daily Crossword

by Virginia Yates

ACROSS

- 1 Lane type
- 2 Steinbeck character
- 3 Bid
- 4 Pot laker Roper
- 5 "Carnes"
- 6 Grand Canyon mount
- 7 Observed
- 8 Gold mine, of a sort
- 9 Highly concentrated pigments
- 10 Palm
- 11 "bag"
- 12 Unhush
- 13 Plumbing concern
- 14 Industry's need
- 15 Sweeten the pot
- 16 Hero
- 17 What a foot soldier does
- 18 Jacob's hern
- 19 Physical entry
- 20 Attention
- 21 Noddy
- 22 Salver
- 23 Aconage's range
- 24 Waste allowance
- 25 Owing
- 26 White sled dogs
- 27 Pre
- 28 Candlestick cover?
- 29 Huron's cousin
- 30 Author Jaffe
- 31 Belgium town
- 32 Vintage car
- 33 Free rein
- 34 Fleet
- 35 See eye to eye
- 36 Concerning
- 37 Sports org.
- 38 (in massed)
- 39 Clink
- 40 Urge
- 41 Regatta item
- 42 (unanimously)
- 43 Saul's
- 44 Latch onto
- 45 This flies, at times
- 46 Campus org.
- 47 Huron's cousin
- 48 Author Jaffe
- 49 Belgium town
- 50 Vintage car
- 51 Free rein
- 52 Fleet
- 53 See eye to eye
- 54 Concerning
- 55 Sports org.
- 56 (in massed)
- 57 Clink
- 58 Urge
- 59 Grenoble's river
- 60 Gave a hoot
- 61 Looks for
- 62 Fine
- 63 Upper story
- 64 Buck
- 65 Coured (with "on")
- 66 Mine find
- 67 Plant pest
- 68 Stowe lth
- 69 Diction
- 70 Often worse than a bite
- 71 Transmitted
- 72 Fish
- 73 Author
- 74 Hunter
- 75 Nocting
- 76 Society page word
- 77 Danner

Business beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Geologists run out of patience

★ **GEOLOGISTS PLAN** to stage a sit-in in front of the Prime Ministry on Tuesday to press for their demands for a 90 per cent allowance of the basic salary similar to government doctors, engineers, pharmacists and others. The geologists are also demanding a solution to unemployment within their ranks. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Samih Darwazah said the ministry would be requesting owners of quarries to employ a geologist at each quarry (Al Rai).

★ **BETWEEN THE** period May 27 and early December of this year, Jordan will participate in 25 international fairs. During the same period, the Kingdom will host more than 15 local and Arab fairs and exhibitions as well as other events where international companies will be displaying their products. Among the fairs that Jordan will be taking part in will be held in Russia, Japan, Syria, Poland, Greece, Belgium, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Ukraine, Germany, Lebanon and Britain. Among the countries which will be displaying their products in Jordan are Germany, Malaysia, Canada and Britain (Al Rai).

★ **THE WATER** Authority of Jordan (WAJ) is owed a total of about JD 9 million by the public and about JD 5 million by official and public institutions and department as of the end of March 1995. The WAJ collected JD 29.3 million last year compared to JD 28 million in 1993. With a total of 548,085 subscribers, the authority sold 98 million cubic metres of water last year, a six per cent increase over the volume supplied to subscribers in 1994 with simple calculation, the volume of water pumped per individual turns out to be 142 litres per day (Al Rai).

★ **THE JORDAN** Trade Facilities Company (JTFC) has obtained the necessary preliminary approval to use its building in Sweifiyah as a 3-star hotel. The building has about 100 rooms provided with full services in addition to a vast commercial complex. JTFC has recently sold half of the project to the Jordan Financial Investments Company for JD 1.2 million and both companies will manage the hotel and the commercial complex (Al Aswak).

★ **A ROYAL** Decree approved an amendment to the regulation for issuing Jordanian banknote. Under the amendment, the words "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" will appear on all Jordanian banknotes in addition to the words "The Central Bank of Jordan" (Al Rai).

★ **THE MINISTER** of post and communications requested the company operating the cellular phone network to reduce the price of phone calls. He said his request came in response to many remarks he received indicating that charging 240 fils per call during daytime and 160 fils per call at nights was too costly. The minister said the company will reconsider the charges before starting operations expected within few months (Al Dustour).

★ **THE ARAB** Electrical Industries Company recorded JD 2.49 million of sales since the company began operations in May 1994 until the end of 1994 with operational costs at JD 2.04 million, gross profit amounted to JD 450,900 last year. Exports, which totalled D 1.81 million, or 73 per cent of total sales, went to Italy, Cyprus, Nigeria and other European countries (Al Aswak).

Bank bans 90 types of responses in battle against rude service

BEIJING (AP) — A Bank battling China's notoriously bad service has told its employees they can no longer use 90 "uncivilised" responses, such as: "Can't you see I'm busy?"

Other banned phrases include "I don't know," "That's not my responsibility," "What's the rush?" "Wait over there," "If you don't like it, talk to the management," and "go complain if you want to complain."

The measures went into effect last August at one bank branch in Linan, in the northeast coastal province of Shandong. The city's industrial and commercial bank has decided to extend the ban to all of its 13 branches, affecting more than 200 employees.

The idea of the customer being king is alien to many service-oriented enterprises in China.

Store clerks are too busy chatting with colleagues or reading newspapers to be bothered with helping customers. Phone inquiries routinely result in being hung up on.

Bank procedures can be complicated and confusing, requiring multiple steps for something as simple as making a deposit or withdrawal. Tellers frequently refuse to look up when customers try to ask for instructions or help.

Part of the problem stems from China's communist system of the past 45 years, under which serving others is considered demeaning. That attitude has started to change in recent years, particularly in enterprises that deal with foreigners.

European lines increase shipping rates

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Fifteen shipping companies announced Monday a new increase in rates as of May 1 to compensate for losses incurred because of the deteriorating value of the dollar.

The currency adjustment factor (CAF) will rise from eight per cent to 9.5 per cent, said an announcement issued by the Europe Middle East Rate Agreement, or EMERA.

The CAF is calculated on the basis of the cost of the shipment.

The lines had raised CAF rates from seven per cent to 7.5 per cent in March.

EMERA's 15 members are CMA, CMBT, Contship, DSR Lines, Eillemann, Hapag Lloyd, Himalay Express, Maersk, NCHP, Nedlloyd, Norasia, P and OCL, Sealand, Senator Line and the United Arab Shipping Co.

JEA hopes to award Aqaba tenders next month

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) hopes to announce the awarding of four tenders related to expanding the Aqaba Thermal Power Station next month after financiers give their approval, according to the head of the authority.

The proposed addition of two 130-megawatt generators to the Aqaba station is key to Jordan's long-term plans to meet the rising demand for energy. The Aqaba station already has two 130-megawatt generators and the expansion was originally planned in 1990 but was deferred when gas was found near the border with Iraq.

However, with the 10 per cent unexpected addition to the population with the return of expatriates following the Gulf crisis as well as a rise in industrial consumption of energy, the JEA revived the Aqaba expansion project last year.

The delay in the project from 1990 to 1994 is believed to have cost the JEA \$50 million in terms of natural rise in costs. In 1990, the estimated cost was around \$250 million; today it is \$300 million.

Mohammad Arafah, director-general of the authority, said the contracts were supposed to have been announced in December but were delayed because financiers had not completed their review of the bids.

"We hope that we would be able to announce the tenders in three weeks from now," Mr. Arafah told the Jordan Times. "If we do not do that then we will face serious trouble in schedules."

Financing for the project is coming from the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, the Japanese government, and the World Bank in addition to local sources. The foreign component of financing is \$180 million and the rest in the form of local infrastructure and logistic support.

It was believed that the concerned Japanese government authorities had not completed their review of the contract documents. Such a review is a key condition for the \$131 million Japanese loan for the project.

Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc., a U.S. firm, is acting as the project consultants for the JEA.

The government has signed a \$115 million loan accord with the Arab fund and another agreement with the Japanese government for \$131 million for the project.

The Islamic Development Bank is also financing the project, but the loan amount was not immediately known.

The World Bank is extending another loan of \$80 million to improve the efficiency of the Kingdom's energy sector.

The JEA will use part of the loans to build the Aqaba part of a linkage between the power grids of Jordan and Egypt as the forerunner of a regional network that would eventually include all the Arab countries east of the Suez Canal — Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

When the Aqaba expansion is completed, Jordan will have an installed capacity of 1,136 megawatts; the JEA share of it will be 1,026 megawatts.

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COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PSC	120	23100	192.500	192.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	15400	74419	4.890	4.810
SAKE OF JORDAN	800	3032	3.820	3.790
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1000	2535	2.530	2.500
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	6400	18320	2.860	2.840
THE HOUSING BANK	7896	60912	7.830	7.710
JORDAN KIDWAY BANK	1046	3090	2.990	2.960
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	12350	17422	1.420	1.420
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	13900	54640	3.860	3.850
BUSINESS BANK	17150	66756	3.940	3.880
REIT KHALA SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	6480	26875	4.250	4.120
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1050	11139	3.720	3.580
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	96150	12141	1.290	1.160
BANKS SECTOR	304726	749519	INDEX NUMBER: 168.41	CHANGE: -0.187
JORDAN INSURANCE	120	496	3.300	3.300
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	422	3200	3.600	3.600
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	12400	32500	2.650	2.620
INSURANCE SECTOR	12670	33428	INDEX NUMBER: 135.38	CHANGE: -0.137
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	61995	111037	1.770	1.780
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	16863	274840	1.680	1.700
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	300	2205	7.300	7.350
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL FEDERATION	100	680	6.800	6.800
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	750	5125	7.150	7.100
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	1300	3917	3.140	3.020
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	8205	20012	2.450	2.390
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	2750	1960	0.690	0.720
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	650	6598	10.150	10.150
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	32900	88123	2.700	2.680
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	7170	24550	3.350	3.450
SERVICES SECTOR	273386	539267	INDEX NUMBER: 143.44	CHANGE: -0.137
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	50	1270	25.900	25.400
ATANKER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	4150	5313	1.270	1.280
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	76749	259160	3.380	3.340
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	844	8058	9.520	9.350
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	644	2348	3.700	3.650
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	6156	26124	4.280	4.260
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	1600	4410	2.750	2.700
SPINNING & WEAVING	10400	27768	2.590	2.570
DAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	4810	39760	8.400	8.250
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	27000	24415	9.200	9.150
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1309	9542	7.350	7.300
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	22800	15614	0.680	0.680
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	10550	15581	1.530	1.480
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	8400	26610	3.150	3.100
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	100	120	1.200	1.200
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	400	1760	4.250	4.400
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	6800	4284	0.620	0.630
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	2250	11618	5.300	5.150
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	3250	6078	1.870	1.870
ARAB CENTER FOR FIBRE & CHEMICALS	4850	12479	2.620	2.520
SAFETY INVESTMENT	250	440	1.800	1.750
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	500	1800	3.740	3.600
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	78950	180747	2.240	2.230
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	273062	686234	INDEX NUMBER: 128.65	CHANGE: -0.877
GRAND TOTAL	867844	2008448	INDEX NUMBER: 150.12	CHANGE: -0.587
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	341578			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	452335			

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Chicago Bulls guard B.J. Armstrong (left) drives for the basket around the coverage of Charlotte Hornets forward Larry Johnson (right) (AP photo)

O'Neal easily beats Olajuwon and Robinson for NBA scoring title

NEW YORK (AP) — It's a good thing Shaquille O'Neal didn't let the NBA scoring title come down to the last game of the season.

The Orlando center spent 78 games making sure there wouldn't be a repeat of last season, when he fell victim to David Robinson and the 71 points he scored against the Los Angeles Clippers in 1993-94's final game.

Despite scoring only 13 points in the Magic's season finale Sunday, O'Neal's 29.3 average was enough to beat Hakeem Olajuwon and Robinson by a comfortable margin.

Olajuwon was second at 27.8 and Robinson third at 27.6.

On April 24, 1994, Robinson scored 71 points against the Clippers to deny O'Neal his first scoring title.

This season, 71 points in the final game would have

left Robinson a full point behind O'Neal.

"I'm just glad my team has confidence in me," O'Neal said Sunday after the Magic lost 113-99 to the New York Knicks. "It means I'm consistent and my hard work has paid off."

O'Neal shrugged off criticism of paying too much attention to his acting and rap careers and too little to his basketball career. Though his field goal percentage dropped from 60 per cent to 58 per cent, it was still second-best in the NBA and his offensive repertoire consisted of more than dunks.

His free-throw shooting, however, is another story and could prove damaging to the Magic in the playoffs. It dropped from 55 per cent in 1993-94 to 53 per cent this season, and his 1-for-6 from the line Sunday was a fitting conclusion.

Utah's John Stockton and San Antonio's Dennis Rodman continued dominating their respective fields without much competition.

Stockton won his eighth straight assists title, finishing with 1,011 in 82 games for a 12.3 average. He had over 1,000 assists for the seventh time in eight seasons and averaged almost three more assists than runner-up Kenny Anderson of the New Jersey Nets.

Rodman, who missed 33 games this season due to injury, suspension and personal leave, easily won his fourth straight rebounding crown.

He had 16 rebounds in the Spurs' final game against Minnesota and finished with 16.8 per game, down from the 17.3 he averaged in 1993-94 and over four rebounds ahead of Denver's Dikembe Mutombo.

Also repeating was

Mutombo, who won his second straight blocked shots title by swatting 3.9 per game. He blocked 4.1 shots in 1993-94.

Golden State's Chris Gatling was the league's most accurate shooter from the field, hitting 63 per cent of his shots.

Sacramento's Spud Webb, who shot 81 per cent from the free-throw line last season, hit 93 per cent of his shots. Mark Price of Cleveland was second at 91 per cent.

Scottie Pippen of Chicago was the steals leader with 2.94, after finishing second last season with 2.93.

Steve Kerr of Chicago and Detlef Schrempf of Seattle were separated by .001 for the league's most accurate 3-point shooter before Sunday's games. When Kerr shot 1-for-3 and Schrempf was 1-for-6 Sunday, Kerr won 52 per cent to 51.

Fun time begins for NBA foes

PHOENIX (AP) — Charles Barkley summed up the difference between the National Basketball Association's 82-game regular season and the upcoming playoffs in one sentence.

"Now the fun starts," he said.

The league playoffs begin Thursday and Friday with the opening games in best-of-five, first-round series. After that, the NBA quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals are best-of-seven affairs.

In the East, second seed Indiana plays host to Atlanta and third seed New York faces Cleveland on Thursday. Top seed Orlando opens at home to Boston on Friday while Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls visit fourth seed Charlotte.

In the West, NBA overall record leader San Antonio plays host to Denver on Friday, the same night second seed Phoenix plays host to Portland. On Thursday, third seed Utah hosts reigning champion Houston and fourth seed Seattle hosts the Los Angeles Lakers.

Following are capsule previews of the first-round matchups:

Eastern Conference

Orlando (57-25) vs. Boston (35-47)

The Magic won three of five over Boston in the regular season and never lost a home game to an Eastern Conference foe. But they had a losing road record and struggled near the end of the season. Shaquille O'Neal led

NBA scorers with 29.3 points and was third in rebounds with 11.4 a game. But weak free throw shooting (54 per cent) makes him a late-game liability. Sherman Douglas and Dino Radja offer some playmaking for the Celtics, but Orlando has Anfernee Hardaway to direct the attack. Horace Grant to help underneath and the depth to advance.

Chicago (47-35) vs. Charlotte (50-32)

Michael Jordan makes the Bulls a favorite, but they will be tested. The teams split four regular-season meetings. Alonzo Mourning and Larry Johnson give the Hornets inside power. Their challenge will be stopping Jordan. Scottie Pippen, Toni Kukoc and B.J. Armstrong. Luc Longley could be a key to success against Charlotte's big men. No team in the playoff wants to be in Jordan's path.

Indiana (52-30) vs. Atlanta (42-40)

The Pacers have become a true title threat behind Dutch center Rik Smits, long-range shooter Reggie Miller and the rebound work of Dale Davis and Antonio Davis. The Hawks struggled after trades before coming together late in the season. Mookie Blaylock's quickness gives the Hawks their best hope, but the Pacers took four of five meetings this season.

Cleveland (43-39) vs. New York (55-27)

The teams split four

regular-season contests. Cleveland's slow-down style produced the worst offense and best defense in the league. They will annoy and could stun the Knicks, who will need a strong effort from Patrick Ewing. If the Cavaliers control the tempo as they like, look for last-second thrillers that work against New York.

Western Conference

Denver (41-41) vs. San Antonio (62-20)

The Spurs boast the NBA's best record, league rebound leader Dennis Rodman (27.8 a game) and number three scorer David Robinson (27.6 points plus 10.8 rebounds a game). The Nuggets battled to the season's final day before securing a playoff bid.

of Dan Majerle. Portland has Otis Thorpe and Rod Strickland and 13 straight seasons in the playoffs, but their best days are behind them — a fate phoenix faces if they do not bring home a title this year.

Utah (60-22) vs. Houston (47-35)

Utah beat the reigning champions in three of five meetings and their playoff series could similarly go the limit. Karl Malone's inside work and NBA career assist leader John Stockton's passing make the Jazz a true title threat. The Rockets are powered by Hakeem Olajuwon (27.8 points, 10.8

PLAYOFF ANALYSIS

But they ousted Seattle last year in the first round when the SuperSonics had the league's top record. Dikembe Mutombo (12.5 rebounds) should have great duels with Robinson, but the Spurs won four of five season meetings and look too tough to falter this time.

Phoenix (59-23) vs. Portland (44-38)

The Suns swept five games with Portland and have a team hungry for a title. They held off a late challenger from Seattle for the Pacific Division crown and feature Charles Barkley's 23 points a game plus the long-range skill

rebounds) and Clyde Drexler (21.8 points). This will be a battle.

Seattle (57-25) vs. Los Angeles Lakers (48-34)

Seattle have something to prove after losing to Denver in last year's first round. Unfortunately, they face a club that beat them four out of five in the regular season. The Sonics will need superior efforts from Shawn Kemp and Gary Payton to outlast a rebuilt Lakers' team paced by Nick Van Exel. The Lakers want to show they are a team of the future. The Sonics need to show they are a team of 1995.

Papers decry Foreman verdict

BONN (AP) — Several German and British newspapers claimed Monday that German fighter Axel Schulz was robbed in his controversial points decision loss to IBF heavyweight champion George Foreman.

"The greatest surprise in heavyweight history was prevented by a wrong decision," said the conservative national newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine. "Schulz won the fight against the boxing legend after 12 glorious rounds, but not the fight against the judges."

"Axel, you are the real winner," said the headline in Bild, Germany's biggest-selling newspaper.

"Foreman had the judges on his side. Perhaps Axel couldn't win because the whole of America is waiting for the Tyson-Foreman fight," Bild said.

The Cologne Express, another tabloid, had the strongest words. "Fixed," said its banner front-page headline. "Boxing scandal in Las Vegas. Axel is the robbed hero."

Foreman was declared the winner of Saturday night's fight in Las Vegas on a majority points decision.

Some German papers reacted with restraint.

The respected Sueddeutsche Zeitung said Schulz had not done enough to dethrone Foreman.

"You can't win on points against Foreman, at least not in America, where he is an economic factor," the Munich-based national newspaper said.

"And according to the law of professional boxing, you can't really even talk about a false decision. The challenger has to attack all the time, punch hard, and he must be better in all ways to beat the champion. Schulz was great, but he wasn't so overwhelmingly better," the newspaper said.

All German newspapers agreed that with a lucrative Foreman fight against Mike Tyson possibly shaping up, Schulz needed a knockout victory to take the title.



Arantxa Sanchez

WTA rankings released

MIAMI (AP) — Croatia's Iva Majoli tumbled three places in the WTA rankings released here Monday, falling from 13th to 16th position.

Moving up one place each as a result of Majoli's lost points from 1994 play were new number 13 Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands, number 14 Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan and 15th-ranked Amy Frazier of the United States.

The remainder of the top 20 was unchanged, with number one Steffi Graf set to extend her lead over number two Arantxa Sanchez next week because of points dropped from last year.

1. Steffi Graf (Ger)	319.07 pts
2. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	299.03
3. Mary Pierce (Fra)	235.36
4. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	211.46
5. Jana Novotna (Cze)	174.97
6. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	146.77
7. Gabriela Sabatini (Arg)	134.66
8. Kimiko Date (Jpn)	122.40
9. Magdalena Maleeva (Bul)	121.42
10. Natalia Zvereva (Blr)	104.41
11. Anke Huber (Ger)	103.43
12. Mary Joe Fernandez (USA)	94.62
13. Brenda Schultz (Ned)	81.47
14. Naoko Sawamatsu (Jpn)	76.02
15. Amy Frazier (USA)	74.95
16. Iva Majoli (Cro)	74.38
17. Lori McNeil (USA)	68.63
18. Julie Halard (Fra)	67.58
19. Amanda Coetzer (RSA)	63.02
20. Helena Sukova (Cze)	59.50

Baseball players are back but owners return worry if fans will

NEW YORK (AP) — Teams are slashing early-season ticket prices, letting kids in some ballparks for free and putting budget-priced meals on the menu. They might even deploy players near the concession stands to autograph scorecards.

Baseball owners are clearly worried whether fans will embrace the game again.

The bitter 252-day strike snuffed out what was shaping up as a potentially classic season last August. It ended a home run record chase, wiped out the World Series and delayed the start of this season by three weeks.

Players ended their strike March 31 only after a court order forced owners to adhere to the terms of the expired collective bargaining agreement.

With opening games slated to begin Tuesday night, the commissioner's office unveiled a new national advertising campaign last week in an attempt to reclaim fans' affection. "Welcome to the show" is the theme.

But the 28 teams will have to demonstrate why the sport that left its followers stranded last summer deserves another look.

Many teams are discounting prices for opening day, some for the opening weekend and others for selected dates through May.

But even with discounted prices as low as \$2 for some seats, only about 24,000 tickets had been sold in the 50,000-capacity Houston Astrodome with only days remaining before the Astros opener.

"No doubt it is going to require some special effort to get the fans back," team spokesman Tyler Barnes said.

The Kansas City Royals are giving away 5,000 general admission tickets to their first four home games and as many as 35,000 meal coupons to reserved ticket holders at

these games. It planned an open house this weekend so fans should see the newly-sodded field-replacing the old artificial turf — the clubhouse and the dugouts.

"We understand the fans have gone through a lot of pain over the past eight months," Royals spokesman Steven Fink said.

The Pittsburgh Pirates cut ticket prices in half for games through May 11, and is offering discounts on parking and concessions.

Pirates players will be more accessible at the park and make more appearances in the community such as at little league games, Greenberg said.

The Boston Red Sox cut prices in half to its first four games and marketing chief Lawrence Cancro said fans will find Fenway Park "more family friendly" with baby-changing tables and lower-priced kid's meals.

The Los Angeles Dodgers rolled prices back to 1998

levels — their first year in Los Angeles — for opening night. That means tickets will go for \$1.50 to \$3.50 a seat compared with the regular rate of \$6 to \$13.

The California Angels will give away prizes every inning on opening day when reserved seats will be available for \$1. The game will mark the 35th anniversary of the inception of the Angels.

Sixty little leaguers will be on the field to throw out the first pitches at the Milwaukee Brewers' home opener. The Brewers will give opening day ticket holders a coupon good for a free ticket for any one of the five Monday night games on the schedule.

The New York Yankees and Mets and the Chicago White Sox are also offering discounts on some early-season tickets and meals.

Team executives hope the game's classic appeal will win back fans on its own as the season progresses.

Wilkins to guide U.S. basketball Olympics

ATLANTA (AP) — Lenny Wilkins, the winningest coach in National Basketball Association (NBA) history, was named coach of the 1996 U.S. Olympic team here Monday by USA Basketball.

And the 1992 U.S. Olympic "Dream Team" assistant coach might not be the only repeater from Barcelona here for U.S. team next year for the centennial Olympic Games.

Such original "Dream Team" as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Charles Barkley and Scottie Pippen will be considered when the Olympic roster is chosen from among the NBA's top players.

"I don't have any indication Michael will play or wants to play," Wilkins said. "It's a little premature right now. Certainly we will not overlook players who have played in the past."

That was not the case when selecting players for last year's U.S. World Championships roster, dubbed "Dream Team II."

"We opted in 1994 not to have repeat players from the 1992 team," USA Basketball president C.M. Newton said. "That's not the case with this team. It will truly be open to every player."

That includes Johnson,

who played in Barcelona after retiring from the NBA once he was diagnosed with the virus which causes AIDS. Johnson has already said he wants to be a part of the 1996 Olympic squad.

"It's great you see players want to be a part of this," Wilkins said. "They all want to compete and represent the USA. But it will be a decision made by the USA selection committee."

NBA foes

Contents of the NBA draft...
The NBA draft is the annual event where professional basketball players are selected by teams. It is a major event for fans and players alike. The draft is held in New York City and is broadcasted on television. The draft is a crucial moment for many players, as it determines their professional careers. The draft is also a major event for fans, as they get to see their favorite players being selected. The draft is a highly competitive event, with many players vying for the top picks. The draft is a key part of the NBA season and is always watched with great interest.

Draft '95 gives NFL another year of the quarterback

NEW YORK (AP) — It's not exactly 1983, when six quarterbacks were taken in the first round. But the 1995 draft is becoming the year of the quarterback in its own way.

Four more quarterbacks — Rob Johnson of Southern Cal, Chad May of Kansas State, Dave Barr of California and Steve Stenstrom of Stanford — were taken in the fourth round as the draft resumed Sunday.

Jay Barker of Alabama went in the fifth. Jerry Colquhoun of Tennessee and Craig Whitham of Pacific went in the sixth. And John Walsh of Brigham Young was taken in the seventh and final round, one that ended with Carolina taking Michael Reed, a defensive back from Boston College.

With six quarterbacks chosen in the first three rounds on Saturday, Sunday's draft brought the total for the draft to 14, compared to nine in seven rounds last year and eight in eight rounds two years ago, the first time the draft was trimmed from 12 rounds.

That wasn't unexpected — this was supposed to be a year when there were more quarterbacks available than in the past. In fact, Johnson, May and Walsh were considered possible late first-rounders at some point.

That left them wondering. "I thought something was wrong with me," said Johnson, who completed 67 per cent of his passes for 2,210 yards at Southern Cal last season and thought he would be the third quarterback chosen. Instead he was the seventh, by Jacksonville with the first pick of the fourth round, and pulled out a book by Bill Walsh to discover why.

"I needed answers," Johnson said. "No one was giving me any answers."

The same went for May, the 111th overall pick by Minnesota.

"I didn't sleep last night, I was tossing and turning," he said.

"I just wanted an explanation. I wish somebody would have called me and told me why I fell so far. It was a shock. It was the worst day of my life."

The quarterbacks weren't the only players chosen in the fourth round who tumbled. Two wide receivers, Lovell Pinkney of Texas and Jack Jackson of Florida, both considered possible first-rounders, went on consecutive picks to St. Louis and Chicago. Their problems? Squabbles with coaches and teammates that lowered their value in the eyes of scouts.

"A pain in the butt to his teammates and a bigger pain to the opposition," Joel Buchsbaum, one of the leading professional draftniks, wrote of Jackson.

Among the other notables to go in the first round of the second day were guard Rich Zatechka of Nebraska, chosen by the New York Giants, and Pete Mitchell, the Boston College tight end taken by Miami. Mitchell, considered too small and too

European Soccer Championship favoured to win Portugal's new generation

PARIS (AFP) — In-form Portugal, who visit Eire on Wednesday, are tipped by many football experts to carry on a special sequence and win the European Championship.

The last three winners — France (1984), Holland (1988) and Denmark (1992) — had, like Portugal, never won a major international trophy.

But four wins out of four for a 100 per cent record under coach Antonio Oliveira gives some argument to Portugal's championship winning potential.

Paulo Sousa, Juventus' 24-year-old midfielder, believed "Portuguese football is definitely on a high right now."

He said excellent youth schemes at Sporting, Porto and Benfica are now bearing fruit in the national team.

As less foreigners fill up Portugal's top teams, there was more opportunity for homegrown youngsters, Sousa said, adding "As a result, our national team is very strong and I believe we can achieve many things in the coming years."

Fluminense's Rui Costa and Parma's Fernando Couto are, like Sousa, proving the pedigree of Portugal's new generation.

Bad news for Eire is the absence of Roy Keane, who has an ankle gash and an abdominal problem.

In other matches, Didier Deschamps, Vincent Guerin, and Zinedine Zidane return to France's squad for the Group One match against Slovakia at Nantes.

France are unbeaten, but, with four goalless draws in five matches, are in third spot behind leaders Romania and second-placed Israel.

Israel welcome back Macabbi Haifa defender Marco Baibul, suspended for the 0-0 draw against France last month. Israel's visit to Poland is the only Tuesday match of the week's 23 fixtures.

Romania's Florin Raduciu, who scored in their 2-1 win against Poland last month, leads the attack at Azerbaijan.

Spain's winning four-match winning run in Group 2 ended in a 1-1 draw at home to Belgium in March. But a win in Armenia should virtually guarantee Spain's place in next year's finals in England.

Valencia fullback Jorge Otero replaces Albert Ferrer, who was injured playing for Barcelona on Sunday.

Belgium, who host Cyprus, appear to be fading off the scene and risk failing to qualify for their third finals running. European champions Denmark entertain Macedonia in an attempt to improve on third place.

Ron Hodgson's Switzerland welcome Turkey in a top-of-the-table Group 3 clash, while third-placed Sweden visit Hungary.

Switzerland, who were trailing 2-0 with just 18 minutes left and managed to force a 2-2 draw away to Hungary, continue to dominate with ten points from four matches.

But Swiss striker Nestor Subiat is out for three weeks after tearing his thigh muscle playing for Swiss Grasshoppers in a Swiss cup match.

Sweden will be without defender Joachim Bjorkland, who was sent off in their 2-1 loss to Turkey last month. Bjorkland threw a punch in a scuffle involving goalkeeper Tomas Ravelli and Turkey's Sukut Hakan.

Roberto Baggio makes his return to the Italian squad, which visits Lithuania in Group 4. Baggio made himself unavailable for last month's two wins in five days over Ukraine and Estonia because of lack of form.

A further win by Italy would put their 2-1 loss on Nov. 13 at home to Croatia further into the background.

Davor Suker, who scored those two goals against Italy, is set to lead the attack of group leaders Croatia at home to Slovenia. Estonia welcome Ukraine in the other Group 4 fixture.

Group 5 leaders Norway play their second match in a row against Luxembourg — this time at home.

Holland, in second spot two points behind Norway, have a potentially decisive match at third-placed Czech Republic. Belarus battle against Malta though realistically the fight is only to avoid the wooden spoon.

Eire host Portugal, who have four wins from four matches, in a top-of-the-table Group 6 clash.

Eire will want to make up for conceding two points after a defensive mishap allowed Northern Ireland's Iain Dowie an equaliser last month.

Northern Ireland travel to Latvia and Austria host Liechtenstein in other Group 6 matches.

Arsenal's Steve Morrow, who has an ankle injury, is the sixth Northern Ireland player to be ruled out — Gary Fleming, Phil Gray, Jim Magilton, Michael O'Neill and Gerry Taggart are the others.

Jürgen Klinsmann is set to skipper his second European championship match, at home to Wales, in the continued absence of Achilles-Tendon victim and usual captain Lothar Matthaus.

Defenders Thomas Helmer and Jürgen Kohler will miss the Group 7 fixture through injury.

Manchester United's Ryan Giggs, who has pulled a hamstring, will not be available to help Wales end their worst run in 26 years. Wales have lost four in a row and are bottom of the group.

Bulgaria, who like Germany, have won four matches out of four, travel to Moldova, while third-placed Georgia host Albania.

AYOFF ANALYSIS

Seattle and Portland...
The AYOFF analysis is a statistical tool used to evaluate the performance of players in the American Youth Football League. It provides a comprehensive overview of a player's performance, including their statistics, strengths, and weaknesses. The analysis is based on a variety of factors, including the player's position, age, and experience. The AYOFF analysis is a valuable tool for coaches and parents alike, as it provides a clear and concise summary of a player's performance. The analysis is also a great way to track a player's progress over time and to identify areas for improvement. The AYOFF analysis is a key part of the AYOFF program and is used by coaches and parents to make informed decisions about their players.



igs released

Real close in on Spanish title

PARIS (AFP) — Real Madrid moved closer to wrapping up their first Spanish title in four years while six German clubs led by Borussia Dortmund and Werder Bremen kept the suspense alive in the Bundesliga.

In Italy, the one-horse race was widened with six games to go when Parma beat Inter Milan 3-1 to move within eight points of leaders Juventus, who lost at home to Padova.

Parma's Swedish striker Thomas Brodin, who broke his ankle playing for Sweden against Hungary five months ago, returned to the side who were deprived through injury of Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla.

Argentina sweeper NestorSENSINI scored twice in each half and Gianfranco Zola added the third to condemn Inter to their first defeat in 10 games.

Juventus, attempting to win the title for the first time since 1988, were beaten at home for the first time this season, losing 1-0 to a 74th minute free-kick from Padova's 24-year-old Dutch midfielder Michel Kreek.

Juventus are still on course for an unprecedented treble of Italian league, Italian Cup and UEFA Cup.

Their opponents in the final of both cups will be Parma, who eliminated Bayer Leverkusen in midweek in the UEFA Cup while Juventus disposed of Borussia Dortmund.

Roma, reduced to 10 men after the sending off of captain Giuseppe Giannini, fell to their first defeat in six games against Lazio.

Lazio were without

Young America regains speed edge

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The mermaid boat Young America regained its speed edge on Monday, keeping itself and new ally Mighty Mary alive and Mr. America's Cup on hold.

Young America led the whole way to beat Stars and Stripes by 52 seconds in the defender finals, reducing Dennis Conner's chances of reaching the America's Cup finals.

A victory by Stars and Stripes would have put Conner back in the America's Cup finals for the first time in seven years.

Conner must now beat America's mostly women crew aboard Mighty Mary on Tuesday in order to reach the America's Cup match against Team New Zealand beginning May 6. If not, the round will finish in a three-way tie and Young America and Mighty Mary will have a

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NOTICE

Elvie F. Ogasma, a national of the Philippines, left the residence of her employer on 24 April 1995 without permission or notice. Any one with information on her whereabouts should contact the nearest police station. All those withholding information or covering for her shall be responsible under Jordanian law.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 675571	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	Tel.: 625155	Nabil & Hisham's
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE		AHLAN THEATRE	
Jeff Bridges & Tommy Lee Jones in Blown Away	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Kim Basinger, Julia Roberts, Sophia Loren PRET - A - PORTER	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Baby's Day Out Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Bad Girls Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30	Musa Hijazi "Sum'a" in the political satire Hi Citizen written and directed by Mohammad Al Shawafa daily on 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes on Monday — Haifa Al Agha in the children's play — Sa'd's Return	COMING SOON The Comedy Show CABARET		Presents: The political satire: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed Saturdays & Sundays.	

30 including 9 Israeli soldiers injured in Lebanon

BINT JBEIL, Lebanon (AFP) — A Hizbollah suicide car bombing and rocket attack on Israeli troops wounded about 30 people including at least nine soldiers in South Lebanon on Tuesday, security sources said.

The suicide bomber struck as an army convoy was entering the Israeli security services building in this town in the Israeli-occupied border "security zone."

It was the first Hizbollah suicide car bombing against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon since 1986.

An Israeli army spokesman said nine troops were wounded, including one seriously. Security sources said helicopters had evacuated at least 10 soldiers, three of them in serious condition.

Twenty other people, including two pro-Israeli militiamen, were also hurt in the bombing and when four Katyusha rockets fired by guerrillas struck the scene of the attack, the sources said.

Israeli officials said seven Lebanese civilians were wounded when mortar shells

hit the Bint Jbeil hospital. One of them was seriously hurt.

Israeli gunners retaliated by pounding villages outside the zone with around 100 shells, a security source said.

"A car packed with more than 100 kilograms of explosives crashed against the security services building as an Israeli military convoy was entering," the source said.

The convoy was made up of two jeeps, two civilian cars and three armoured troop carriers.

Hizbollah claimed the attack saying in Beirut: "Our combatant-martyr rammed his explosives-packed car into the convoy causing a large number of victims among the Israeli soldiers."

A building housing the Israeli civilian administration was destroyed and a key Israeli army barracks was heavily damaged, the spokesman added.

The blast was heard seven kilometres away and shattered windows in the town of Bint Jbeil.

It triggered panic as streets

quickly emptied with residents covering indoors fearing further violence.

Later Israeli warplanes flew at low altitude over Nabatiyeh and Zaharani north of the zone as well as the Hizbollah stronghold in the Iqlim Al Tufah hills.

Helicopter gunships circled the zone where Israeli militiamen stepped up roadblocks.

The attack came as Israeli chief of staff General Amnon Shabak warned there had already been a "near doubling" this year in the number of clashes between Israeli forces and Hizbollah compared with the start of 1994, and the group planned to step up attacks.

"Not a single day goes by without Hizbollah launching an attack and we record between 50 and 60 anti-Israeli operations each month," Gen. Shabak told the Israeli parliament's defence and foreign affairs committee.

Israeli troops have imposed a ban on motorists driving solo in the "security zone" since the 1985-1986 suicide car bombings.

Israel and PLO resume Cairo talks

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel began a new round of talks in Cairo on Tuesday on long-delayed Palestinian elections which would focus on allowing residents of Arab East Jerusalem not only to vote but to stand as candidates.

"We're now facing a crucial issue which is the participation of the residents of East Jerusalem in the elections. It is time to reach an agreement on this issue. Participation means to us having voters, candidates and polling boxes in Jerusalem," Saeb Erakat, head of the Palestinian delegation, told Reuters.

The Israeli delegation, headed by Yoel Singer, had no immediate comment.

A Palestinian negotiator confirmed secret talks were going on between PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the key issue of redeploying Israeli troops away from Palestinian population centres on the West Bank to allow elections

to take place.

Israel wants Palestinians in Jerusalem to elect candidates from outside their constituency but not to stand in the polls.

"This is unacceptable, unreasonable and illogical because participation means participation of voters and runners. We haven't heard in history that people voted in elections without having their own representatives," Dr. Erakat added.

He said Israel, which insists that the issue be tackled when the final status of Jerusalem is negotiated in 1996, should distinguish between the two "different issues."

So far, Dr. Erakat said, Israel and the PLO have agreed on the structure of the elected Palestinian council and on its judicial, executive and legislative powers.

An accord has virtually been reached on international supervision of the polls by the United States, the European Union, Russia, Canada, Japan, Jordan, Egypt and Norway, he said.

Sharif Zeid in Tunis to chair joint panel

TUNIS (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker arrived here Tuesday at the head of a Jordanian ministerial delegation to attend the meetings of the Joint Jordanian-Tunisian Higher Committee.

Welcoming the prime minister and the Jordanian delegation was Dr. Hamed Al Qarawi, the Tunisian prime minister, with whom Sharif Zeid is co-chairing the two-day higher committee meeting.

"Tunisia and Jordan are bound by ties of friendship and have common economic and social interests and both are oriented towards democracy," said Dr. Qarawi in welcoming Sharif Zeid.

He said that the higher committee will direct its attention towards encouraging businessmen and investments from Jordan and Tunisia to launch joint economic ventures.

Sharif Zeid said that Jordan was keen on developing bilateral ties and promoting cooperation with Tunisia in all fields.

The committee meeting is

expected to end with the signing of several agreements on promoting trade and economic cooperation and encouragement of investments.

The agreements are designed to increase the volume of trade between the two countries and open the way for closer economic cooperation.

The meeting preceded by meeting of the joint technical committee which prepared the agenda for the talks starting later Tuesday.

Sharif Zeid is accompanied by Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izzein, Minister of Transport Samir Kassar, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, Interior Minister Salameh Hammam, Minister of Tourism Abul Ilah Khatib and other officials.

Upon their departure the Jordanian delegation were seen off by Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Karaki and other senior government officials.

Vargas Ilosa receives Spain's Cervantes Prize

ALCALA DE HENARES, Spain (AP) — Calling literature his "first and greatest love," Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Ilosa was honoured Monday with Spain's Cervantes Prize, considered the most prestigious literary award in the Spanish-speaking world.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia presented the award to the 59-year-old writer in a ceremony in the university of Alcala De Henares, the birthplace of Miguel De Cervantes.

"Literature has been my first and greatest love, the most beloved of servitudes," Mr. Vargas Ilosa said in an acceptance speech for the award, which includes a 15-million-peseta (\$120,000) cash prize. He cited writers from round the world as influences, beginning with Cervantes, whose Don Quixote is considered the first modern novel. The award is presented each year on April 23, the anniversary of Cervantes' death in 1616. The winner was announced last November.

Mr. Vargas Ilosa, who also holds Spanish citizenship, published his first novel, an account of life in a Peruvian military academy, in 1963 — "La Ciudad Y Los Perros" (known in English as "The Time Of The Hero"). Other well-known works include "Los Cachorros" (The Cubs and Other Stories), "La Tia Julia Y El Escritor" (Aunt Julia And The Scriptwriter), and "Conversacion En La Catedral" (Conversation In The Cathedral).

Hariri could step down this year

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, architect of Lebanon's reconstruction, needs a rest and has decided not to stand for a second term, his close friend and defence minister was quoted on Tuesday as saying.

The remarks by Defence Minister Mohsen Daloul indicated that the 50-year-old billionaire tycoon, who has set Lebanon on the road to recovery from the 1975-90 civil war, would step down by the end of the year.

"According to my information Prime Minister Hariri has decided not to stand as a candidate for the formation of the next government. It is time for him to take some rest," newspapers quoted Mr. Daloul as saying.

Mr. Hariri, who took office in October 1992, was in Paris on a private visit. Aides in Beirut would not immediately comment.

There is no requirement for forming a new government before President Elias Hrawi's term end on Nov. 23. The incoming president must appoint a new cabinet.

"Let the candidates for the office of prime minister prepare themselves. Now is their chance," Mr. Daloul was quoted as saying.

Mr. Hariri has been frustrated by divisions in his cabinet, allegations of profiteering and delays in getting parliamentary approval for his \$11.4 billion plan for infrastructure reconstruction over the next 10 years.

He tried to resign last December, citing anger at politicians blocking his plans, but was persuaded to carry on by Syrian leaders who have 35,000 troops in Lebanon and are the country's main power broker.

The December crisis caused a \$340 million run on the Lebanese pound — costing the central bank 11 per cent of its foreign exchange reserves in two days trading — as panic-stricken investors dumped the currency.

Beirut foreign exchange dealers said on Tuesday they did not expect another currency crisis, even if Mr. Daloul's remarks proved to be true.

"Maybe investors will change from pounds to other currencies because many people believe Hariri and the stability of the foreign exchange market are linked," said Talal Abou Zaki of Bank of Beirut and the Arab countries.

"But the Central Bank will intervene if Hariri is prime minister or not... I don't think we will return to the instability we had before."

Another dealer who asked not to be identified reported increased demand for dollars but said there was no danger of a serious run on the pound and he did not believe Mr. Daloul's remarks.

"I believe this is a balloon... we have got accustomed to these rumours," he said. "I don't think Hariri will go. My intuition is that even if he goes he would come back soon."

Turkey says 20,000 soldiers withdrawn from north Iraq

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey pulled out nearly two-thirds of its troops from northern Iraq five weeks into its offensive against Kurdish rebels, the military spokesman said on Tuesday.

Colonel Dogu Silahcioglu told a news conference that 20,000 troops, comprising five brigades, returned to their bases in Hakkari and Sirnak provinces on the border.

State television showed soldiers, tanks and armoured personnel carriers, flying Turkish flags, crossing into Turkey from the Habur border post under heavy rain before dawn Tuesday.

About 12,000 soldiers remain in northern Iraq.

"The remaining troops will also return home when their mission is completed during the course of the operation," Col. Silahcioglu said. He did not say when that was expected.

However, military analysts noted that a full withdrawal could take longer as the rebels continued to challenge the army as late as Monday.

Forty-one rebels and two soldiers were killed in a clash.

Turkey sent 35,000 soldiers into Kurd-controlled northern Iraq to wipe out camps used for hit-and-run attacks by about 2,800 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels. The rebels have been fighting

for autonomy in southeastern Turkey since 1984 in a war which has killed more than 15,000 people.

About 3,000 Turkish soldiers were withdrawn earlier this month.

Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Iraq are protected by a U.S.-led allied air force and are out of Iraq's reach.

U.S. officials had called for a quick withdrawal last week during Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's visit to Washington.

Dogu Ergil, a political scientist at Ankara University and expert on Kurdish affairs, said the remaining troops would be used to cut off transit routes in northern Iraq to protect the ongoing military campaign inside Turkey.

Col. Silahcioglu did not say where the 20,000 soldiers had been deployed in northern Iraq. Local sources said about 1,000 of them had been based in Dikanjari, the former Kurdish stronghold that was the first site attacked when the invasion began March 20.

Another withdrawal site was reported as Metina, 20 kilometres from the Turkish border.

The military said 505 rebels were killed since the start of the offensive. Fifty-eight soldiers also have died.

Ms. Ciller told a meeting

here of her True Path Party that Turkey's cross-border raid amounted to self-defence. "We gave a great lesson to those who declared a liberated zone in this area," she said.

Ms. Ciller warned that Turkey would strike back in northern Iraq if the rebels attempted to renew their attacks.

Turkey has said it will be up to local Iraqi Kurds to maintain the border security. Ms. Ciller said the government will also take measures, but she did not elaborate.

The daily Milliyet reported on Tuesday that Turkey was installing an electronic network to monitor the border. The cost of the project was estimated around \$120 million, to be completed by the end of the year.

As part of the army's stepped up campaign to crack down on the rebels inside Turkey, seven more rebels were killed in Tunceli and another one in Batman during the clashes on Tuesday, the regional governor's office said.

About 20,000 soldiers, backed by jetfighters, have been waging an offensive against the rebel hideouts in the mountains of Tunceli.

Ms. Ciller said 320 rebels were killed in southeastern Turkey over the past six weeks.

Bahrain sentences man in unrest

MANAMA (Agencies) — A Bahraini convicted of sabotage during the political unrest that has swept Bahrain since December has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, according to an official statement published by newspapers Tuesday.

The sentence handed down to garage mechanic Hussein Abbas Al Marhoon, 23, is the first by the state security court, where more than 40 people accused of murder and sabotage are awaiting trial.

The sentence, prominently displayed in the island's three dailies, said Mr. Marhoon was also fined 58,000 dinars (\$153,700), the cost of the damage he caused.

The stiff sentence was widely seen as an indication that subsequent sentences are likely to be equally harsh to deter further unrest while authorities are conducting a dialogue with community leaders to discuss protesters' demands.

The official statement said Mr. Marhoon told the investigating judge he was a member of a small group that had carried out acts of violence and sabotage to undermine Bahrain's security and stability.

The authorities have not yet announced indictments for the alleged masterminds of what officials say was a foreign-inspired plot to destabilise Bahrain, a key banking and services centre in the oil-rich Gulf.

Mr. Marhoon was arrested for the Feb. 28 arson of a clubhouse in Sanabis, one of the Shiite Muslim villages around Manama which have been the centre of the unrest in recent weeks.

Shiites make up more than 50 per cent of the indigenous 500,000-strong population and have long languished at the lower end of the social scale.

Then riots erupted early December amid demands by Shiite preachers for the restoration of the parliament that was dissolved in 1975 and for better job opportunities for some 30,000 mainly Shiite unemployed.

Mubarak: Peace faces 'enormous difficulties'

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak warned Tuesday that the Middle East peace process is facing "enormous difficulties" and urged all parties to try harder to end the stalemate in negotiations.

Mr. Mubarak also renewed Egypt's demand that the Middle East rid itself of all weapons of mass destruction.

He made the remarks in a nationwide address on the anniversary of Israel's 1982 withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, which the Jewish state had occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

"The peace process is going through enormous difficulties, which require warning bells unless all (parties) realise the risks and unless the elements of logic prevail and reason triumphs," Mr. Mubarak said in his televised address.

He specifically mentioned Israeli-Syrian negotiations, which have been stalemated for weeks.

"It has become obvious that there is no alternative but the complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, according to the principle of all territory for complete peace," Mr. Mubarak said.

He mentioned "stalemate and obstinacy" as the main obstacles to reaching a solution, leading to frustration and disappointment in the region.

Mr. Mubarak said the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the first between an Arab country and the Jewish state, should serve as a model for others.

On the nuclear issue, Mr. Mubarak again urged Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is being reviewed at a conference in New York.

Israel, the only country in the region with nuclear weapons, has said it will not sign until there are no threats from Libya, Iran and Iraq.

"It is not logical that we live in the age of peace while we still feel the burden of war, hatred, doubts and fear," Mr. Mubarak said.

He added: "We don't want to create a crisis and make new demands, but we need proof of goodwill, which will create a new Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction."

Mr. Mubarak said in the televised speech that Egypt expected progress on the stalled Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process despite "remaining obstacles."

There was "no alternative" to Israel returning all of the Golan Heights to Syria as part of a peace deal, and that the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon should also not be overlooked, he added.

Mr. Mubarak said Egypt was in the middle of a major project to "rebuild the four corners of the Sinai and to bring the waters of the Nile there in the next few years to irrigate an immense area of this territory."

He said the project would create a million jobs, cost 70 billion Egyptian pounds (\$20 billion) and bring three million people into the desert area over the next 23 years. There are only about 160,000 inhabitants in the region at the moment.

Israel completed its withdrawal from the Sinai on April 25, 1982, six months before Mr. Mubarak came to power. In 1987 Egypt finally recovered the seaside resort of Tabu in the far east of Sinai after international arbitration.

Winnie Mandela released from clinic

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Winnie Mandela, estranged wife of President Nelson Mandela, was released from the hospital Monday after being treated for diabetes.

Mrs. Mandela appeared to be in good condition and would be monitored by her physicians, said Chantal Cooper, spokeswoman for Linksfield Park Clinic. Mrs. Mandela was admitted nearly a week ago for tests and rest. Doctors found that she was suffering from diabetes — an electrolyte imbalance that was affecting her kidneys, blood pressure and blood sugar.

Mrs. Mandela was fired on March 28 from her post as deputy minister for arts, culture, science and technology. She challenged her husband's decision in court on technical grounds.

She was rehired only to be fired again after Mr. Mandela consulted an opposition party leader, a constitutional requirement he had previously neglected. Mrs. Mandela resigned before the firing was to have become official.

Father of Oscar winner Nikita Mikhailov injured in car crash

MOSCOW (AP) — Sergei Mikhailov, author of the Soviet national anthem and the father of Oscar-winning filmmaker Nikita Mikhailov, was hospitalised following a car accident Monday.

The 82-year-old Mikhailov was driving his Volvo in central Moscow when he crashed into the concrete wall of a tunnel, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported. He suffered injuries to his head and chest.

Mr. Mikhailov, who has written poems and plays for children, won fame for the text of the Soviet anthem. Nikita Mikhailov won the Oscar this year for the best foreign film for *Burnt By The Sun*.

Survey shows surge in cannabis use among teens

LONDON (AFP) — Nearly a third of British 15- and 16-year-old students admit to smoking cannabis, roughly six times more than in 1989, according to a survey published here Monday. More than 48,000 students between 11 and 16 years were surveyed nationwide last year by Exeter University's Schools Health Education Unit.

In the 15-16 year group, 32.9 per cent of boys and 27.3 per cent of girls admitted trying the drug at least once. A similar survey in 1989 showed 5 per cent of boys and 3.5 per cent of girls in that age group said they had smoked cannabis.

Wrong suspect in blast plan to sue

CAIRO (AFP) — A Palestinian American arrested in Britain and sent back to the United States as a suspect in the Oklahoma car bombing said Tuesday he was planning to sue the British authorities and the U.S. media.

Ibrahim Ahmad told the London-based Arabic daily Al Sharq Al Awsat that he was planning to sue the British authorities "for the humiliating and outrageous treatment which was handed out to me by the investigators" when he was stopped at London's Heathrow airport.

"The investigators forced me to undress and I was naked for four minutes. They refused to give me anything to eat and did not allow me to contact my family in

Jordan to reassure them," Ahmad added.

He said the U.S. investigators in Chicago had been very polite even though "one or two agents in the immigration department mistreated me."

He added he was looking into whether to make an official complaint against "some American media who decided in the first hours after the explosion that I was the main suspect."

He said he hoped the Americans would realise that "terrorism has no one homeland or identity and it is not the work of Arabs or Muslims who are also victims of terrorism."

Mr. Ahmad was arrested last Wednesday after landing at Heathrow on a flight from

Chicago and sent back to the United States by the British authorities as a possible suspect in the bombing of a nine-storey federal building in Oklahoma City the same day.

He was later released by the U.S. authorities without charge.

On Tuesday the death toll seven days after the car bombing was at 86 and rising as rescuers continued to search through the wreckage. More than 430 people were wounded.

One man, Timothy McVeigh, faces charges in connection with the blast and is said to have links to a paramilitary extremist group. But investigators admitted Tuesday the main suspect still eluded them.

Donors aim to unblock aid for Palestinians

PARIS (AFP) — International donors to the Palestinian National Authority are to meet here this week to try to unblock the flow of aid to the struggling economy in the self-rule areas, diplomats said Tuesday.

Palestinian International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath said: "We will ask donor nations to honour their commitments" before leaving Cairo for the talks.

He added the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will also urge donor nations "to work towards paying off the deficit in the Palestinian budget, which amounts to 126 million dollars."

After the September 1993 signing of the declaration of principles donors pledged \$2.2 billion for the Palestinians over five years.

But Palestinians say only \$215 million has been delivered out of a total \$720 million promised for 1994.

Payments have been held up amid concern, among some donor countries over the authority's budget deficit.

Delegations from the European Union, the United States, Russia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the World Bank are to meet in Paris with bilateral sessions beginning Wednesday and culminating in a plenary session on Friday.

Diplomats said that an informal meeting could be held as early as Tuesday evening between experts from the U.S., EU, Japan, and Norway as well as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.

U.S. State Department Coordinator for Middle East Affairs Denis Ross is

also due in Paris on Wednesday along with Israeli foreign ministry director general Uri Savir and his finance ministry counterpart David Brodet.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Danny Chek has voiced optimism that the Paris talks could achieve a breakthrough in resolving the obstacles to international aid.

But Dr. Shaath said international donors must also begin "implementing the projects they have promised in the self-rule areas" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He added the PLO would try to bring pressure from the donor countries on Israel "to end the closure on the Gaza Strip."

Israel eased a total closure on Monday allowing Palestinian workers from the self-rule Gaza Strip and the occupied West

Bank to enter the Jewish state for the first time in 10 days.

But Palestinians say remaining security arrangements still threaten to choke the Gaza economy.

More than 100,000 Palestinians worked in Israel before tight restrictions were imposed two years ago.

Representatives from more than 30 donor countries met in Gaza last month to examine the distribution of funds in preparation for Thursday's meeting.

Donors have slowed the disbursement of aid demanding transparent accounting procedures.

Dr. Shaath, Finance Minister Mohammad Nashashibi and Economy Minister Ahmad Qouria are to meet with Israeli delegates in Paris on Wednesday.